Commentary

Volume Seventy, Number One, July 1980

The Rise & Fall of the New Foreign-Policy Establishment

Carl Gershman

Analysis Terminable
Frederick Crews

A Yiddish Poet in America
Ruth R. Wisse

Living in Jidda
Dale Walker

Don Quixote & Other Jewish Memories—A Story
John Auerbach

FICTION:

Marge Piercy & Ann Beattie
Pearl K. Bell

MUSIC:

Why Weill?
Samuel Lipman

BOOKS:

Robert Nisbet
Eric M. Breindel
Gerald N. Grob
Robert Richman
Sidney Hook

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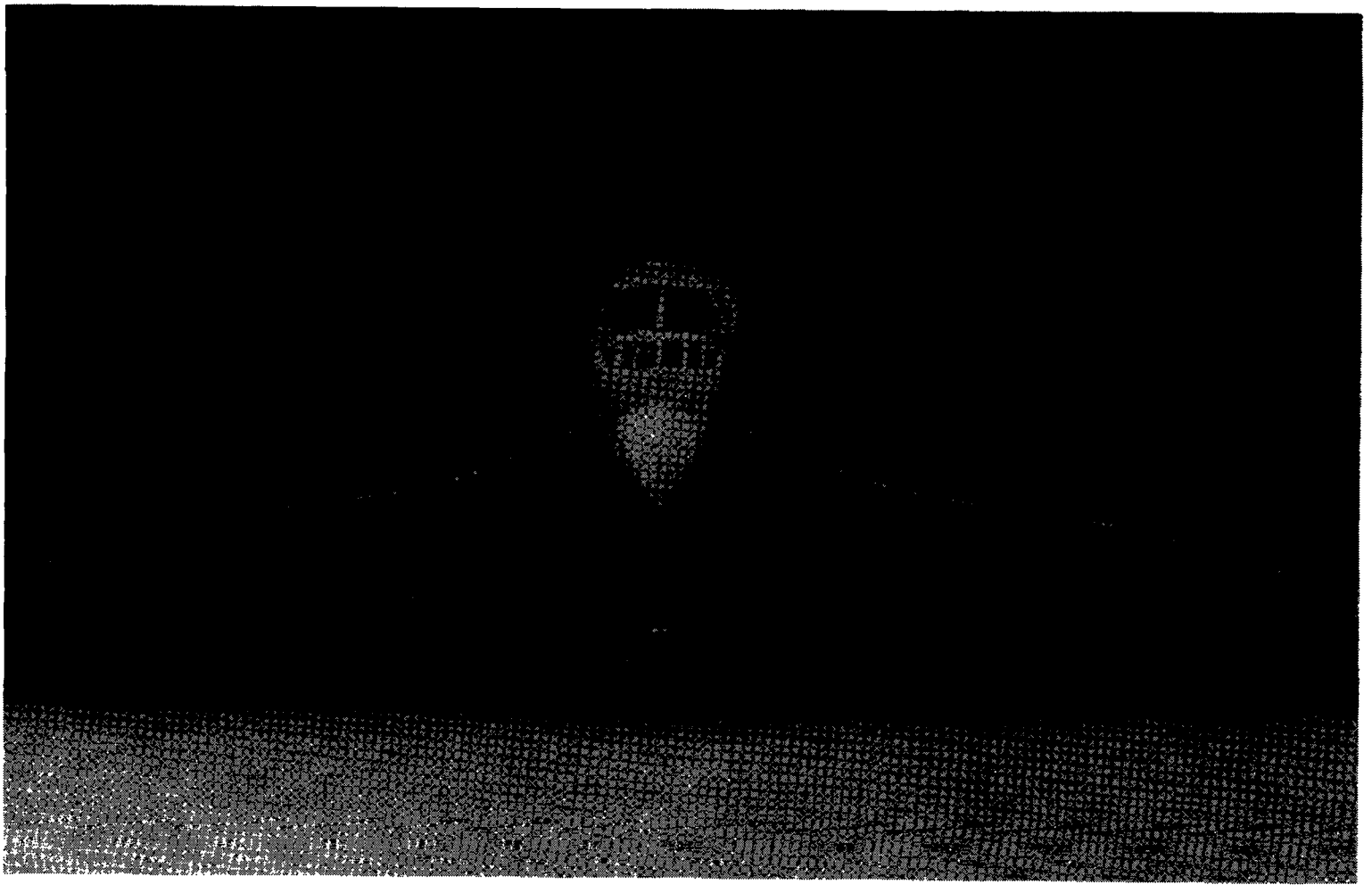

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Commentary

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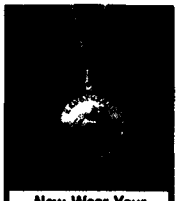
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Letters from Readers

The ABM & Defense

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Over the years, COMMENTARY has contributed mightily to the enrichment of American cultural, intellectual, and political life, but in one regard it is truly unique: it is the only periodical of general circulation that undertakes systematically to alert its readers to the growing danger to our national security, to the urgency of the need to confront and overcome that danger, and to an ongoing discussion of the measures that must be undertaken to that end.

Carnes Lord's "The ABM Question" [May] is the latest example (following hard upon "The Present Danger," Norman Podhoretz's brilliant and troubling call to arms in March). With consummate skill in exposition of an arcane subject, Mr. Lord makes clear why placing the revival of the ABM program on the defense agenda is a matter of the greatest urgency. Yet, amazingly (and endlessly frustratingly), the self-evident truths set forth in his article have been hidden for a decade from public view and have not received adequate discussion even in the defense community. The article also throws a bright light on the reasons for these national self-delusions. It should receive the widest circulation, since the ABM program is the only response to the Soviet's first-strike monopoly that is both effective and timely. The MX system is effective, but it cannot be fully deployed for a decade.

In this connection, it may be of interest that last fall, in writing an article on SALT II for Freedom House's *Freedom at Issue* (Nov.-Dec. 1979), I searched the literature of the ABM question with scant success. Nevertheless, I had also come to the conclusion and argued that the revival of the ABM program was an indispensable component of the American response to Russia's first-strike monopoly and war-winning nuclear doctrine. Mine, however, was the conceptual reasoning of an amateur Clausewitzian while Mr. Lord's article treats the subject exhaustively and with great professional authority and cogency.

ELIAS M. SCHWARZBART

New York City

Soviet Intentions

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The April issue, with its articles by Richard Pipes ["Soviet Global Strategy"] and Edward N. Luttwak ["After Afghanistan, What?"], is superbly incisive. The only additional problem area that Mr. Luttwak might also have dealt with in discussing Soviet map-changing opportunities is South and Central America and Mexico. Ever since Castro gave the Soviets a staging base in Cuba, they have been building up an infiltration-subversion-guerrilla-arms-and-logistic-support apparatus. This is being put in place to create a major diversion in the area, timed no doubt to coincide with the inevitable Soviet squeeze in the Middle East. The obvious Soviet purpose for wanting a base on this continent has, as usual, until just recently escaped the analysis of the hopeful liberals in our media and universities. . . .

T. F. WALKOWICZ

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The well-documented and perceptive article by Edward N. Luttwak raises an important question. It does not seem likely that the new boldness and a certain finesse in Soviet actions abroad have been initiated by the present Kremlin gerontocracy. Therefore it is probable that we are witnessing the beginning of a new phase, the phase of Soviet adventures abroad, conceived and directed by the heirs of the present leadership; their influence is already being felt in the Kremlin. If this is the case, the status quo that so many Americans still believe in has already started to crumble, and the tension between the superpowers will soon escalate dangerously. . . .

ARYE LEV-RAN

La Jolla, California

France's New Right

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In what might otherwise have been an excellent study of the French New Right ["France's New Right," March], Roger Kaplan incorrectly associates the GRECE circle and, more specifically, Alain de Benoist, with the ideology of Marshal Pétain and with the old

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French Right. The charge simply won't wash. Whereas Pétain and his defenders appealed to clericalism, nationalism, and monarchism, it is exceedingly hard to find any of these tendencies in de Benoist's writings and speeches. His philosophy is unabashedly atheistic and rooted in the Enlightenment's scientific materialism. In a published *affrontement* with a Catholic philosopher from the University of Paris, de Benoist attacks Christianity as empirically indefensible and as a hindrance to scientific progress. An unusual position for a *Pétainiste,* although one entirely appropriate for a child of the Enlightenment. As Thomas Molnar has observed, de Benoist's critiques of medieval and Christian institutions owe as much to Voltaire's and Gibbon's historical writings as they do to Nietzsche's more oracular pronouncements on the slave ethic.

Mr. Kaplan does not pay sufficient attention to de Benoist's scientific materialism or to GRECE's repeated pleas for Western European unity. The fact that de Benoist despises liberal democracy—together with the Old Right and the Catholic Church—supposedly qualifies him as a crypto-anti-Semite and spiritual ally of the Vichy regime. My inclination would be to scold Mr. Kaplan for an anachronistic and petulant judgment. Because de Benoist dredges up Gibbon's attacks on the Christian's timidity and civic indifference, and ridicules the Bible's lack of a scientific basis, does not mean that he and his followers are signaling their support for political anti-Semitism. One does not have to like de Benoist to recognize that his movement is clearly not the old French Right in new wrappings. Although new political ideologies may not be any more attractive than those they replace, despite the old French saw, history does change.

PAUL GOTTFRIED

Rockford College
Rockford, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Roger Kaplan's article is very clear and perceptive, though I do not find all his conclusions totally convincing. It is interesting to point out, as Mr. Kaplan does, . . . the similarities between the New Right and the *Action Française* (this comparison is especially valid for those thinkers who were influenced by Nietzsche, but we should also remember that Charles Maurras, unlike Alain de Benoist, emphasized the social utility of the Catholic religion). But the *Action Française* has been only one of the groups on the French Right since the Revolution, and the others have not usually been anti-Christian. . . .

It would be interesting to study the aftermath of the story. After the storm, the calm. The intellectual world seems to have forgotten the New Right. Why? The role of fashion (in France, intellectual fashions change quickly)? The weakness of New Right thought (de Benoist and Pauwels are not Maurras)? Or the success of the Left's offensive against the New Right? The reaction from the Left has in fact isolated the New Right. If de Benoist and Pauwels wanted to seize cultural power, it seems that for the moment, and for the near future, they have failed . . . and the Left has won. I think these three explanations (and perhaps others) are all partly true.

PHILIPPE BÉNÉTON

Faculté des Sciences Juridiques
Rennes, France

ROGER KAPLAN writes:

To Paul Gottfried: I don't understand what won't wash, because I did not—even between the lines—associate anybody with the "ideology" of Marshal Pétain. As for the "old French Right," well, there *are* connections, but then one must know which Old Right one is talking about. Similarly, I did not call Alain de Benoist a crypto-anti-Semite or a spiritual ally of the Vichy regime. (What is a crypto-anti-Semite, anyway?) And what does it mean to say that "history does change"? As a matter of fact, history does not change. What happened, happened. Of course, history in the sense of man's examination of his past changes. Indeed, each generation rewrites history. If Mr. Gottfried will be a little more clear, I shall endeavor to explain to him in what ways de Benoist and his friends are good old French right-wingers, but one has to know where one should begin because this is a long story and a large subject.

Philippe Bénéton's letter deals with more interesting issues. He is

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2 Health Systems Agencies were created as part of the National Health Planning and Resources Development Act of 1974. Their mandate is to improve the health of the American people: continuity and quality of health services; restrain increases in the cost of providing health services and prevent unnecessary duplication of health services.

3 In a recent survey by the American Health Planning Association, health planning agencies across the country reported that in one two-year period they were instrumental in preventing over $3 billion in capital investment for health care facilities. It's also important to note that there have been no indications that the quality of medical care has been impaired by their efforts.

4 It's estimated that 100,000 short term hospital beds stand idle—an idle bed costing almost 60% as much to maintain as one in use. Blue Cross recently noted that health care providers in southern California are reported to have ordered or installed enough $500,000 CAT scanners to serve the entire western United States.

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altogether correct to remind us that Maurrassian sociology required a role for the Catholic Church. And many young Catholics of the 30's gravitated toward the *Action Française*. He is right, too, to point out that de Benoist and Pauwels are simply not as profound as Maurras (though the latter, like all cranks, could become terribly boring). He might have added—I believe he would agree with me here—that there is also a significant difference in the audiences addressed by our respective rightists. The point is that the audience for Maurrassian ideas was widespread, whereas it was only by turning over *Figaro-Magazine* to Pauwels that the owner of *Le Figaro* gave the New Right an audience of any size. The fact, moreover, that *Figaro-Magazine* has published writers who deliberately dissociate themselves from its editor and his New Right friends, and that it has repeatedly run pro-American, pro-Western-alliance articles, suggests that with or without the offensive of the Left against them, the New Rightists could not have imposed their views on the reading public, even that part of it most inclined to sympathize with them.

Who is winning the cultural fight is far from clear, however. The New Right came out very strongly with its ideas, in pure form, last year. Naturally, in this form they were rejected by most intellectuals. In diluted form, however, they remain influential. I should think that Philippe Bénéton and his friends have their work cut out for them.

Resolution 242

To the Editor of Commentary:

Alan Dowty's perceptive article, "In Defense of Camp David" [April], does not mention a curious fact about U.S. policy. The resolution of the UN Security Council of last March, from which President Carter felt constrained to dissociate himself, contained a highly revealing omission in its text that has not been noticed. The key paragraph "recalling" the "pertinent" Security Council resolutions starts with numbers 237 and goes on listing them. But it excludes 242, the resolution that mentions secure and defensible borders for Israel. . . . It is significant, too, that the communiqué issued by the Common Market after a visit by the PLO last April to the Brussels European authorities also lists Security Council resolutions that should be complied with and also leaves out 242.

The text of the March UN resolution was meticulously discussed and one gathers that there would have been no majority for it if the list had included 242. Thus United States Ambassador McHenry was instructed to vote for a resolution that left out 242 deliberately at the very time when his President was trying once again to restart Camp David, which is based on 242. . . .

It is now obvious that the PLO and its supporters regard 242 as too "pro-Israel" and by insisting on its exclusion, they hope to strengthen their argument that 242 must be rewritten to make it acceptable to the Arabs. . . .

The exclusion of 242 is designed to show that Israel's security and its defense are not relevant to the issue at hand. The fact that this exclusion is well under way shows the superior tactics of the anti-Israel establishment in the foreign ministries of the Western powers, and the naiveté of Israel's supporters.

L. R. Muray

Letchworth, England

Alan Dowty writes:

I thank L.R. Muray for calling attention to the quiet campaign against Resolution 242, which, together with the Camp David framework, remains the only viable basis for Arab-Israel diplomacy. Acquiescence in the non-mention of 242 should, as he suggests, be added to the list of recent American actions tending to undermine the peace process.

Original Sin

To the Editor of Commentary:

I would like to express my deep appreciation for Sidney Hook's "Isaiah Berlin's Enlightenment" [May], a discussion of a great book that is worthy of its subject. The article analyzes, corrects, and carries further the discussion of the fundamental issues with which Isaiah Berlin is concerned. Thus Mr. Hook's treatment of the theme will be as indispensable as the book itself for all those concerned with the ethos of Western man and the future of society.

But on one point I must demur. Mr. Hook writes: "All we need to do is to make explicit the realization that man is a finite, limited, imperfect creature and therefore always open to the solicitations of evil and the corruption of power and place—the kernel of the Christian myth of original sin. . . ." I have no strong objection to describing this concept of human nature as "the kernel of the Christian myth of original sin"; however, the kernel has been preserved through the centuries and wrapped in so many layers that the original taste has been all but lost. What has replaced it are extreme formulations of the original concept and these have exerted a powerful and less than beneficial influence on the conscious thought and the unconscious attitudes undergirding Western civilization to the present, whether we call it Christian or post-Christian. More than historical justice is involved in recognizing that Mr. Hook's description of human nature, which he describes as "the permanent legacy of the Enlightenment," is precisely the outlook of the normative tradition in Judaism, not of the historically dominant standpoint in Christian theology.

[Rabbi] Robert Gordis

Jewish Theological Seminary of America

New York City

Sidney Hook writes:

I agree with Rabbi Gordis about the mischievous, even pernicious, role of the myth of original sin during many centuries of Western history, but the durability and persuasiveness of the myth are rooted in the incontestable facts of human finitude and limitation. These facts are incompatible with utopianism but not with a seasoned liberalism. Recognizing them does not paralyze the nerve of intelligent action in behalf of a better or less evil world. However, as I have argued against Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich in my book *Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life*, acceptance of these truths does not entail belief in any supernatural existence.

In view of Rabbi Gordis's scholarly authority, I am impressed by his contention that what I called "the permanent legacy of the Enlightenment, meliorism or the *possibility* of change in human nature" is, in his words, "precisely the outlook of the normative tradition in Judaism." But are there not other traditions in Judaism, expressed in the Book of Job and in the cosmic piety of those who accept the holocausts of this world as part of the divine

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Babies, Strikes and Compulsory Unionism Don't Mix.

Marlene Swanson, R.N., is a dedicated nurse who takes care of newborn babies, many of them premature, most of them black and Hispanic, and all of them in need, at a community hospital outside Providence, Rhode Island.

When an illegal strike was called, Marlene refused to join it. She crossed the picket line and reported to work because, as she says, "Nurses take the Hippocratic oath too, like doctors. I felt a moral responsibility to those infants."

Angry union officials immediately retaliated. Marlene, along with the other nurses at the hospital, had been forced to join the union to keep her job. This compulsory union membership, union officials claimed, made all nurses subject to fines for any disobedience of their decisions.

They charged Marlene Swanson with violating union by-laws, held a sham "trial," and fined her $250 for taking care of her infant patients during the strike. When Marlene appealed the fine to the union membership, they increased it to $300!

An undaunted Marlene refused to pay the fine, and the union took her to court. At first, she didn't know where to turn for the legal help she urgently needed. After all, she was just one member against the entire Rhode Island State Nurses Association.

Then she remembered reading about William F. Buckley, Jr.'s legal battle against a union, and called his office. She was referred to the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, which agreed to provide counsel.

A defense was prepared and presented so effectively that the union suggested the case could be settled out of court if Marlene would give the fine to charity. She flatly refused "because a lot of other nurses were watching to see what happened to me. I could not admit I was guilty of anything."

A judge of the Rhode Island Superior Court emphatically agreed, handing down a directed verdict against the union and for Marlene Swanson. Judge Clifford J. Cawley ruled that state public policy was quite clear that strikes by nurses were illegal, and that it is the "zenith of asininity" to fine anyone for failure to take part in an illegal strike.

The importance of Marlene's victory became quickly apparent. When another illegal strike occurred at the hospital, not just one, but 18 nurses crossed the picket line, putting their patients first and their union second.

Marlene Swanson was fortunate. She received experienced legal help in a case that lasted nearly two years. She would not have won and established an important principle—that nurses cannot be compelled to participate in an illegal strike—without that expert legal assistance.

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation is helping everyone it can—currently in more than 100 cases involving illegal union political spending, violations of academic and political freedom, union violence, and other abuses of basic employee rights.

If you'd like to help people like Marlene Swanson, we'd like to hear from you.

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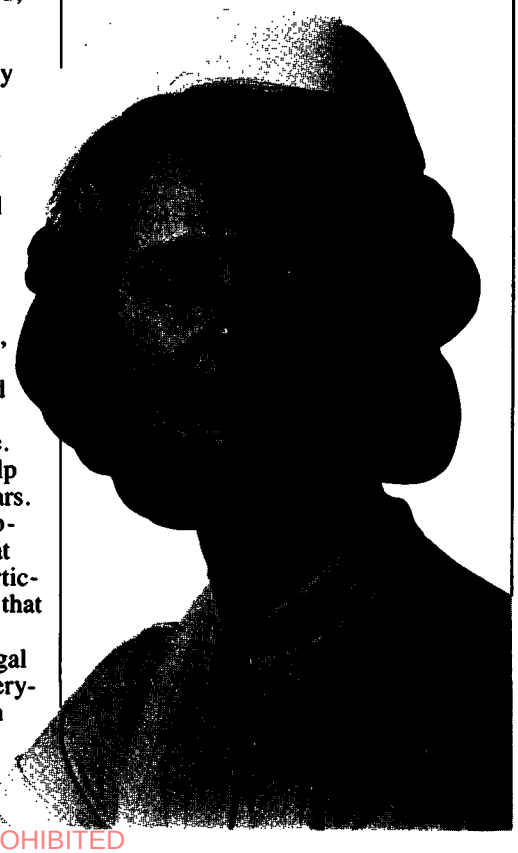

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scheme of things as they await deliverance by the Messiah?

To accept the "outlook of the normative tradition in Judaism," if I understand it properly, no more requires a belief in supernaturalism than to accept the kernel of truth in the myth of original sin. A truth even older than the Enlightenment is that men create their gods in their own moral image, which implies that morality is autonomous of religion and theology.

The South & Race

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Terry Eastland has some perceptive things to say about sociopolitical polarization in North Carolina ["The Communists and the Klan," May]. But he seems to feel that the Communist groups are more of a threat than the racists, who merely "persist." By now Mr. Eastland has no doubt heard about the Nazi who collected 43 per cent of the vote in the North Carolina primary for the Republican nomination for State Attorney General! He ran on a platform of explicit support for the racists charged with the Greensboro slayings. While some liberals may be seduced into supporting the "anti-racist" CWP (Communist Workers party), a substantially larger number of white Southerners are apparently willing to tolerate or support Klansmen and Nazis as slightly crude or overeager representatives of the Reagan-Helms consensus. Today, the general conservative drift gives greater latitude to right-wing extremists, just as the leftward drift of the 60's gave an impetus to violent leftist movements.

Mr. Eastland notes that the working-class types whom the CWP wants to mobilize tend to be anti-union and are sometimes susceptible to the red-baiting appeals of the Klan. But *who benefits* from this irony? Is there not a hoary Southern tradition of conservative exploitation of racial tensions within the working class to impede class solidarity? . . .

THOMAS ROBBINS
New Haven, Connecticut

TERRY EASTLAND writes:

The candidate Thomas Robbins refers to, Harold Covington, collected almost 56,000 votes. Some of Covington's support was unquestionably racist; but many Covington votes—I would guess the large majority—were cast out of stupidity and ignorance. It is instructive that Covington "carried" the black Windsor Community Center precinct, which sits several blocks away from the site of the November 3 slayings (he collected 4 votes to the winning candidate's one).

Mr. Robbins apparently believes that I believe that racists in the South "merely 'persist.'" What I actually wrote was this: "The resurgence of the Klan in recent months indicates that the old malignant kind of racism persists." Mr. Robbins seeks villains, starting with Covington and then moving on to North Carolina's Senator Jesse Helms and Ronald Reagan. I believe there are important distinctions to be made among the positions of these men with regard to race. But in any case my concern at the conclusion of the article was less with identifying individuals as racists than with identifying the effects—as seen in the actions of the Communists, the Klansmen, and others—of the recent denial of an idea that had been reflected in law just a few short years ago—the idea that individuals should be considered without regard to race.

Finally, as to who benefits from the irony that the anti-union, working-class types who fired on the Communists are just the sort that the latter wished to mobilize, Mr. Robbins implies that it is the conservative millowners who benefit. There is indeed a Southern tradition of "conservative exploitation," and it may well be that one effect of the November 3 slayings has been to encourage anti-union sentiment among workers and thus "benefit" the owners. But if we are talking about who benefits from what, it should also be noted that by baiting the Klansmen, the CWP did no favor to the blacks who lived in the community it decided to march in. We may be seeing the rise of a new Southern tradition having its roots in the 60's—that of radical exploitation of racial tensions, of Communist efforts to manipulate blacks for ulterior political ends.

The Holocaust

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Vital's view of *Britain and the Jews of Europe* by Bernard Wasserstein [Books in Review, February] is marred by contradictions and outright distortions created by omitting facts which are essential to an understanding of the subject and of the Holocaust.

Mr. Vital says that Wasserstein's book "is about just one class of such onlookers [to the Holocaust], the British. . . ." Later he contradicts himself: "[T]he British . . . went so far as to *oppose* the evacuation of Europe and thus were more than mere bystanders." . . .

Nowhere does Mr. Vital mention that the British had no right to be in Palestine except as the mandatory power charged by the League of Nations to assist in the establishment of a Jewish national home. There is no historical connection between the British people and Palestine, but the Mandate, conferred upon Great Britain at the San Remo Conference of 1922, recognizes explicitly the "historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine." Thus the British authorities held the keys to the only piece of this earth to which the Jews had an internationally recognized right as a people. But Mr. Vital writes as if Palestine were British soil. It was not. The British had no business in Palestine, under international law, except to help the Jews enter, not to prevent them from entering. In 1939, at the beginning of World War II, when Germany's intention to persecute the Jews was clear to everyone, . . . the British government closed the doors of Palestine. It thus became an accomplice to the Holocaust, dooming hundreds of thousands if not millions of Jews to the gas chambers. All our admiration for Churchill and the British people in their fight against Nazi Germany should not blind us to this fact. . . .

Yet Mr. Vital expresses understanding for the British authorities: "The problem which the German war against the Jews set the British was a complex one. . . . The fear that special and explicit sympathy for the Jews might somehow spoil the clear outlines of the fight against tyranny, and serve to confirm Goebbels's line that the war was being fought in the Jewish interest, was genuine, even if we, today, may think it misplaced." . . .

Mr. Vital then proceeds to express a theory that in effect tends to assign part of the responsibility for the Holocaust to the victims, and not to the British. He says: "Palestine was denied them [the Jews] too; nonetheless it was only in Palestine and for Palestine that there was constant pressure from anyone to allow them in. But the source of the pressure was the Zionist organization; and in these cir-

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cumstances, effectively, perhaps fatally, the cause of European Jewry came to be linked with the cause of Zionism in practice as it had always been linked (so far as the Zionists were concerned) in theory."

And later: "Yet in the light of the present study, there cannot but arise the question whether those so earnestly dedicated to the liberation of the Jews by new, more forceful, more systematic, and more lasting means had not, by their entanglement in a fight with the British, only contributed their mite too to the sealing off of the roads out of Europe."

This astonishing explanation of the Holocaust . . . is not only factually untrue, but an obvious attempt to put distance between the Jewish people and the Zionists. . . .

NORMAN C. CHAITIN
New York City

DAVID VITAL writes:

The historical analysis of the circumstances in which the greater part of European Jewry was slaughtered with hardly anyone lifting a finger to interfere is one of obvious complexity and importance. The complexity is too great by far to be disposed of in an exchange of letters to the editor, but equally its importance is too great for any contribution to it to be shrugged off. Alas, Norman C. Chaitin is evidently uninterested in *historical* analyses—else why, for example, should he think the question of the "right" of the British to be in Palestine (as opposed to the plain, brute fact that they actually governed the country) to be decisive and more than yet another pathetic illustration of the evil nature of the world we live in? And then Mr. Chaitin's tone and wording are so uncivilized that there seem to be no grounds for expecting a dialogue between us to be useful to either side or even, in the strict sense, possible. I shall, therefore, limit myself to comment on two of his odder assertions.

First, about my supposedly assigning "part of the responsibility for the Holocaust to the victims." Mr. Chaitin would do well to recall that the victims, for the most part, were put to death. Accordingly, no responsibility can be "assigned" to them except by lunatics. But Rabbis Wise and Silver, Drs. Goldmann and Weizmann, Messrs. Ben-Gurion and Gruenbaum and so on down the list—the class of people whose "responsibility," I suppose, is in question—were not put to death and were not victims. The heart of *one* of the matters of the Holocaust (there are many others) is precisely in this distinction, namely, that some Jews were victims and some were not. And it is concerning those who were not victims, in that they were never compelled to inhabit ghettos or camps, let alone die in them, that we are entitled to ask certain questions. Of course, they are not even remotely the questions that are to be asked of the Germans. Nor are they the questions, which are different again, that are to be asked of the Americans or the British. The Jewish leaders, and the Zionists among them, may have had rights to Palestine, but they did not *govern* it or any other territory. But neither were they totally without power or influence; and above all they did claim to speak for Jewry. One may therefore ask: What did they say? Did they speak to any effect, i.e., did anyone listen? And if they did, did what they said help to reduce the dimensions of the slaughter even minimally, or did it not? These are questions of furious debate among historians. I myself presume to offer no answers of my own. But I do think that the subject is a legitimate one and that it is proper and important to inquire into it.

My second comment is on Mr. Chaitin's assertion that I offer an "explanation" of the Holocaust (plainly, I do nothing of the kind) and that my article was "an obvious attempt to put distance between the Jewish people and the Zionists." I am not sure I understand the phrase "to put distance." But if Mr. Chaitin means to assert (as I suspect he does) that I am out to persuade "the Jewish people" to turn against "the Zionists"—two large and woolly categories that I find difficult to handle anyway—I think I can allow my record of published work and public service to speak for itself. If, however, he means no more than that I have sought to imply that some Jews are Zionists, while others (many more, of course) are not—well then, while I did not have that in mind, I would see no objection to doing so. After all, Mr. Chaitin lives on the American continent with the bulk of Jewry, while I live in western Asia with the minority. The distance between us is unmistakable.

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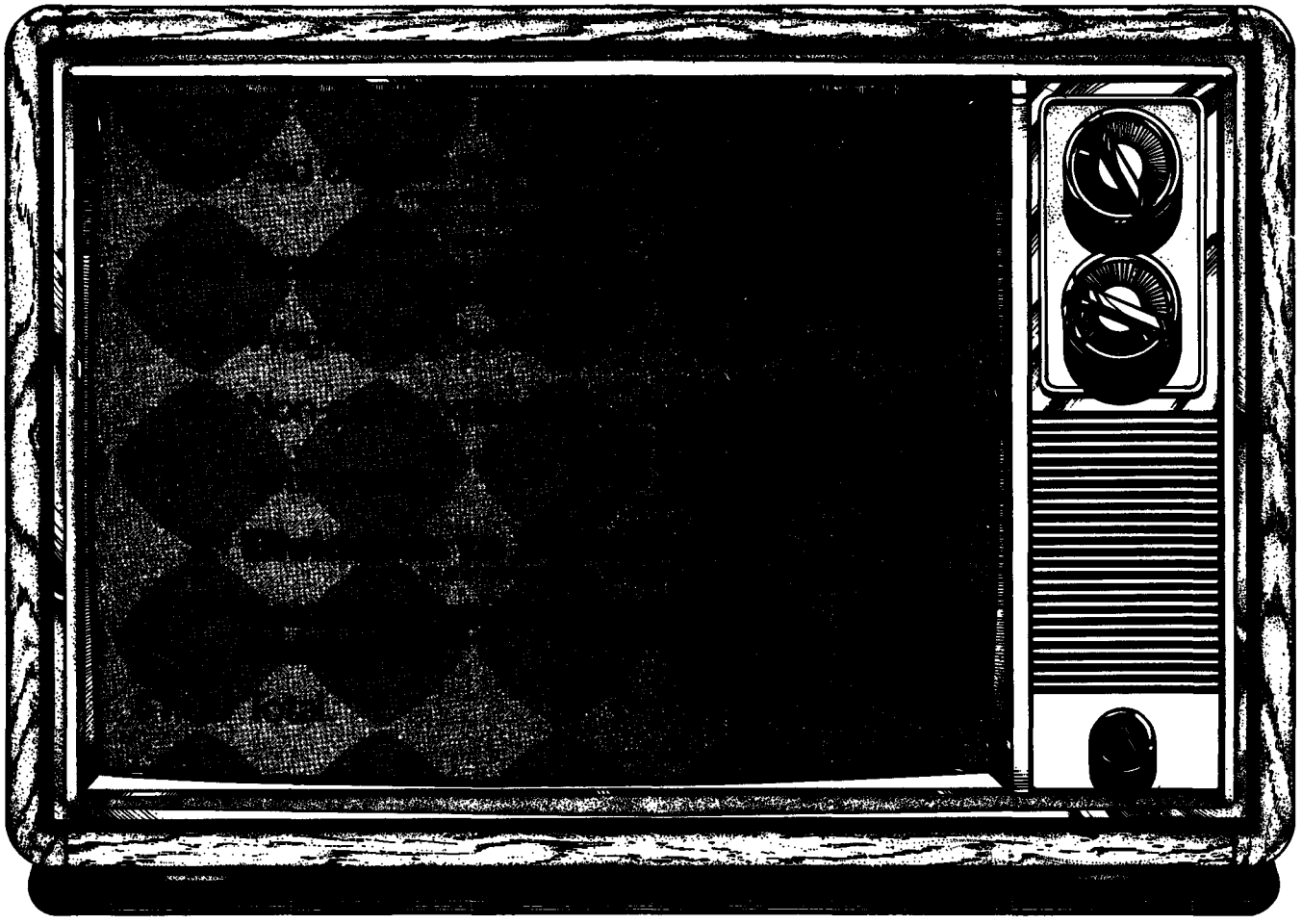

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The Rise & Fall of the New Foreign-Policy Establishment

Carl Gershman

There is . . . a self-deluding interpretation of the contemporary world situation. It works as a sort of petrified armor around people's minds. Human voices from seventeen countries of Eastern Europe and Eastern Asia cannot pierce it. It will be broken only by the pitiless crowbar of events.

—ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN
Harvard University, June 1978

WHEN President Carter said that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had caused him "drastically" to alter his perception of Soviet intentions, many people wondered how a great power like the United States could have as its leader a man who, by his own admission, did not understand the most important strategic and military issue facing the country. The answer, at once simple and dismaying, is that the President's pre-Afghanistan "perception" of the Soviet Union was not at all exceptional or a product of his own naiveté but rather reflected the conventional wisdom of most government officials, academic experts, and others specializing in foreign affairs. No less a figure than former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, a man who epitomizes urbane sophistication in foreign affairs, had observed in an interview with *Time* magazine in 1978 that President Carter and Soviet President Brezhnev had "similar dreams and aspirations" about the future of the world. Views of this kind had not gained widespread acceptance in the country as a whole, since most Americans remained distrustful of the Soviet Union. But by the time Jimmy Carter assumed office, such ideas had become the stock-in-trade of the relatively small group of specialists constituting what is often called the foreign-policy establishment.

The foreign-policy establishment associated with the administration of Jimmy Carter may be viewed as the natural successor to the old internationalist establishment which presided over American policy during the era of the cold war and which collapsed as a result of America's defeat in Vietnam. The demise of the old establishment occurred about a decade ago and is not talked about much today, except as a subject of historical interest (it is, for example, an important underlying theme of Henry Kissinger's *White House Years*, which deals with the period in question). Nonetheless, it was a turning point in recent American history, for with the passing of this establishment, the bipartisan consensus which had sustained U.S. foreign policy and defined its purposes for a generation disappeared, leaving a paralyzing residuum of division and demoralization. Moreover, its passing was the occasion for the emergence of a new establishment dedicated to the transformation of American foreign policy in light of the experience in Vietnam.

It is perhaps misleading to distinguish between an old and a new establishment, since we are really speaking of a single group. The Council on Foreign Relations, the preeminent institution of the old establishment, did not fold up, nor was its leadership usurped by a dissident tendency. But it emerged from the trauma of Vietnam a very different institution from what it had been before and with a new political character.

It was not merely that the Council's reputation had been tarnished by the role its leading members had played in shaping American policy in Vietnam, a role amply documented in David Halberstam's book, *The Best and the Brightest*, or that it was increasingly opening its membership, as well as the pages of its journal, *Foreign Affairs*, to younger people who were bitter critics of that policy. Nor was it simply the fact that its influence over American foreign policy had significantly diminished in consequence of the unprecedented antagonism between the Council and the White House whose new occupant, Richard Nixon, had never been accepted by the establishment and refused to acknowledge its authority. The principal way the Council had changed was that its leading members had ceased to believe in the world outlook they had espoused since the end of World War II.

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In 1970, writing in *Foreign Affairs*, Townsend Hoopes, who had been Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and Under Secretary of the Air Force during the Johnson administration, asked how "so many intelligent, experienced, and humane men in government"—the establishment, in other words—could have failed to understand the "immorality" of the Vietnam intervention and the "cancerous division" it had created within America. His answer, which was fast becoming the prevailing view of these "intelligent, experienced, and humane men" themselves, was that they were products of a period dominated by the "cold-war syndrome and its ramified legacy." No one, Hoopes wrote, certainly no one *within* the establishment, could deny that these were "men of good conscience." But this was precisely why they had been so "vulnerable to the developing *hubris*." Having embraced too fervently the Wilsonian "legacy of America's democratizing mission," they were "impelled by the iron logic of a messianic ideology" to take "actions beyond the rational requirements of our national security." Concluding that "the highest test of character is to learn from the past, to admit one's mistakes, and to act on that admission," Hoopes urged unilateral withdrawal from Vietnam and the rejection of the cold-war mentality that had led us into the war in the first place.

But it was not enough for the establishment to condemn the war in Vietnam. To restore its political authority, it had to undo its own historical link with the conflict. This was accomplished by transferring responsibility for the war to the Nixon administration which remained, as Hoopes wrote, "residually hooked on the cold-war syndrome." Thus in 1972 the then editor of *Foreign Affairs*, the late Hamilton Fish Armstrong, wrote an article blaming the Nixon administration as well as the American public—but not the establishment—for the war in Vietnam and the sad decline of America's prestige in the world. Armstrong reiterated a thesis put forth fifty years earlier in *Foreign Affairs* by Elihu Root, to the effect that in a democracy the people are responsible for the conduct of foreign policy, and that only a well-informed public can curb the irresponsible acts of political leaders. In this respect, the American intervention in Vietnam, like the Senate's rejection in Root's time of U.S. participation in the League of Nations, could be traced ultimately to the "mistaken beliefs" of the public and thus constituted a failure of American democracy. The establishment, it seemed, had nothing whatever to do with this failure, though it would have an important role to play, according to Armstrong, in curing America's ills and "re-humanizing" the culture.

It was still not enough, however, merely to create the myth that the establishment had played no part in the Vietnam disaster. It was also necessary, as Hoopes had observed, to break with the "cold-war syndrome." Here the senior members of the establishment faced a difficult dilemma, for they could not repudiate the beliefs of a lifetime without destroying—not just in the eyes of others but, more critically, in their own as well—their legitimacy as a source of political authority. The containment of Communism was not, after all, a tactic which could be lightly abandoned in the course of a prudent retreat from a position of "overcommitment." It was the strategic core of the establishment's world view, the "basic organizing principle," as Zbigniew Brzezinski called it, which had for twenty-five years given coherence, continuity, and purpose to its stewardship of American foreign policy. Containment was as much a part of the identity of the establishment's senior members as was the memory of Munich and of the Soviet Union's seizure of Eastern Europe after the war—critical experiences which taught that totalitarianism could not be appeased.

Containment was, in a word, the establishment's creed. And since, as George Lichtheim once observed, "No ruling class can function without a creed," the establishment could regain its authority only if it fashioned a new creed, taking account of the failure in Vietnam and offering a new direction for American foreign policy in the post-Vietnam era.

Here the leading figures associated with the old establishment—men like McGeorge Bundy, William Bundy, Cyrus Vance, and Clark Clifford—were at something of a disadvantage, for they were too tied to the past to make a clean break with it, and their confidence had been too visibly shaken for them to chart a new course with the boldness that would be required. Still, they were distinguished and experienced men, and their support for the effort to reconstitute a functioning establishment would be valuable. Their conversion to a revised world view would suggest the emergence of a new consensus, while their steadfast presence would preserve the appearance of continuity, stability, and moderation—essential features of any establishment. Moreover, they still possessed considerable influence, if not with the Nixon White House then at least among its powerful critics in Congress, the media, and the academic community. They could not be the architects of a new establishment, but their role could be something more than merely honorific.

The task of ideological reconstruction fell primarily to a group of specialists associated with *Foreign Policy*, a journal founded in 1970 "to stimulate rational discussion of the new directions required in American foreign policy" after Vietnam. Its two editors, Samuel P. Huntington and Warren Demian Manshel, felt that a magazine with "no institutional memory" was needed to redefine the "basic purposes" of America in the world "with a keener awareness that an era in American foreign policy, which began in the late 1940's, had ended." As it hap-

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pened, the political outlook that *Foreign Policy* adopted was quite consistent with the one beginning to be developed in *Foreign Affairs*, and many of the same people wrote for both publications. But in the new journal one could discern a more systematic attempt to revise American policy and to formulate a new post-Vietnam world view.

The specialists who contributed most to this revision were not a monolithic group. Among them were some members of the old elite such as Townsend Hoopes, Paul C. Warnke, and Thomas L. Hughes. A larger element consisted of younger government officials of the "Vietnam generation" such as Leslie Gelb, Richard Holbrooke, and Anthony Lake, and academics like Richard H. Ullman of Princeton, who could reasonably think of themselves as future leaders of a revived establishment. They were joined by a small group of radical intellectuals, among them Richard J. Barnet of the Institute for Policy Studies and Richard A. Falk of Princeton, who saw the need for basic changes in American society if the country's foreign policy was to be set aright.

In addition to these different tendencies, several individuals who are not so easily categorized made important contributions to the effort to revise U.S. foreign policy. One of them was George F. Kennan, formerly a foreign-service officer and now at Princeton, who was best known as the author of the famous "Mr. X" article of 1947 in *Foreign Affairs* setting forth the containment doctrine, though he had broken with this policy even before it became fashionable to do so in the late 1960's. Another was Zbigniew Brzezinski of Columbia, who did not break until the early 1970's, and then did so very suddenly and with an elaborate theoretical justification. A third important figure was Stanley Hoffmann of Harvard, a consistent critic of U.S. foreign policy whose Gaullist opposition to U.S. leadership in the world merged in the 1970's with the post-Vietnam denigration of American global power.

Writers like Kennan, Brzezinski, and Hoffmann differed with one another on significant points and in the emphasis they gave to various issues. But such differences (regarding U.S. relations with allies and with the Third World and the relative importance of transnational forces as opposed to the prerogatives of the nation-state) were much less important than their agreement that containment was no longer a valid basis for American foreign policy. In fact, opposition to containment was the principle that united all the writers who participated in the redefinition of an establishment perspective on foreign affairs. It was the starting point for any discussion of the U.S. world role, the basic assumption that all shared and none questioned. Opposition to containment could not by itself serve as a new creed, since it pointed in no positive direction. But the reaction to the Vietnam war was such that it was possible to bring people together merely on the basis of what they were against. And what everyone was against—at least everyone who aspired to a place in a new foreign-policy establishment—was American resistance to the advance of Communism in the world.

Thus during the first half of the 1970's, an elaborate intellectual structure was built in defense of the idea that the containment of Communism by the United States was neither possible, nor necessary, nor even desirable. This idea, above all others, was the "lesson of Vietnam," and the overriding purpose of the aspiring establishment was to make it the guiding principle of American foreign policy as a whole.

THE argument that the containment of Communism was no longer possible began with an acknowledgment that the old establishment had ceased to function in any meaningful sense. Whether its passing was attributed to the Vietnam war, as by the British journalist Godfrey Hodgson in *Foreign Policy*, or to fundamental social changes which had displaced the "Wasp elite" from its position of unchallenged power, a view set forth by Brzezinski, the result was that no confident, cohesive leadership group which believed in containment and could command authority now existed in the United States.

The departure from the scene of this old establishment was accompanied by the arrival of what an article in *Foreign Affairs* called "the new generation of isolationists." This article, along with similar pieces that appeared in *Foreign Policy*, defended the attitudes of educated young Americans who were revolted by the war in Vietnam, profoundly disillusioned with American society, irritated by the "simplistic" distinction between the "free world" (a term never used without quotation marks around it) and the Communist world, and opposed to any form of military intervention, even where it was not dictated by the imperatives of containment. In a word, according to the *Foreign Affairs* piece, "they see no country for whose security they would fight."

But it was not only young people who felt this way. Americans in general, the journalist Ronald Steel declared in *Foreign Policy*, "are tired of the violence that has been committed in the name of peace, . . . of the numerous interventions conducted in the tired vocabulary of anti-Communism, of the sacrifice of their own unmet needs to an insatiable war machine, and of the deliberate deceit practiced by their leaders." Taking his own reading of the public mood, Bayless Manning, the then President of the Council on Foreign Relations, concluded that "the domestic atmosphere at this time of post-Vietnam and post-U.S. *imperium* is not propitious for a remobilization of the moral energies of the nation for a major overseas initiative." Watergate was still another factor undermining support in the country for a policy of containment, for as Leslie Gelb and Anthony Lake

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wrote in *Foreign Policy*, it had done for the concept of "national security" what Vietnam had done for "commitment," namely, to make it "an object for derisive satire." "For those who have been waging the fight to reduce defense expenditures these past five years," they added, "the demise of the concept of national security will come as a godsend."

Beyond the political atmosphere in the country and the attitudes of particular groups, American society was systemically incapable of sustaining a policy of containment. In the first place, as Adam Yarmolinsky (formerly of the Pentagon, now an academic) argued, American society simply could not afford to pursue a containment policy that would tie up resources and energies needed to deal with such critical matters as the plight of the cities, the needs of blacks and the poor, the restlessness of students, and the pollution of the environment.

Nor could we continue to tolerate the kind of political abuses that seemed to be the unavoidable consequences of containment. In competing with totalitarian states, Columbia's Marshall Shulman wrote in *Foreign Affairs*, democratic systems may be tempted to adopt the undemocratic methods of their adversaries, the example cited being the behavior of the CIA. Anthony Lake identified a parallel problem: "the psychology of the cold war" had encouraged government officials to lie to the public in the interest of national security, thus undermining the credibility of the government and causing educated people to regard official statements "with the same suspicion as a cigarette commercial." Ironically, in Richard Ullman's view, there was much more reason to believe that containment threatened American democracy than that it was necessary for our democracy's survival.

George Kennan shared these concerns about the effects of containment on the health of American democracy, but he went further in concluding that the United States was not "well constituted . . . to play a very active role in world affairs." The immense size and diversity of the country and the competing pressures of numerous political and ethnic groups and organized lobbies had made it impossible to conduct a coherent foreign policy, let alone one with ambitious objectives. The wisest course, according to Kennan, would be for the United States to recognize its limitations and "follow a policy of minding its own business to the extent that it can."

These various domestic contraints on the exercise of American power abroad, involving both political attitudes and structural features of the American system, were thought to present a formidable and probably insuperable obstacle to the continued pursuit of the containment policy. But even if none of them existed, the opponents of containment still felt that the United States had no choice but to abandon the use or even the threat of military force to oppose Communist advances in the world. "Perhaps the principal lesson of the past decade," Warnke and Gelb wrote, "is that military force is a singularly inept instrument of foreign policy." In a world dominated by nationalism and rising demands for economic equality, one could not emphasize enough, in Stanley Hoffmann's opinion, "the increasingly obvious irrelevance of military power to most of the goals pursued by states." In such a world, the United States, as "the biggest fly on the flypaper," would have to accommodate to the new forces and seek influence through the use of economic inducements rather than through the futile reliance on military power.

Since it followed from this line of reasoning that the Soviet Union was stuck on the same "flypaper" as the United States, containment, even if it were not also unfeasible, was in any case unnecessary.

"No nation," Hoffmann declared, "however mighty, can now pretend to shape or manage world order along the lines of its own preferences; any nation that tries will stagger from arbitrariness—the choice of the wrong track—to confusion —the attempt to run on all tracks at once." According to Richard J. Barnet, not only had it become much more difficult for both major powers to extend control over other countries, but recent history had shown that even "the entry of new countries into the Communist bloc involves heavy costs as well as benefits for the Soviet Union." The obvious conclusion, as stated by Charles Gati of Columbia (who imputed the view to the Nixon administration as well), was that "the possible future extension of Soviet influence (outside of Europe) might represent such acute problems for the Soviet Union as the extension of American influence has for the United States, and for this reason the United States should be attentive to but not overly anxious about such possibilities."

In fact, the whole notion that the outcome of conflicts like the one in Vietnam mattered any longer in world politics was based on a concept of security that had been rendered obsolete by advances in military technology. With both powers having acquired the capability to strike quickly anywhere in the world with missiles or conventional military forces dispatched from their own territory, the need to rely on local defense arrangements or to deny each other "strategic real estate" had greatly diminished. Paradoxically, therefore, wrote Barnet, "the arms race has reduced the tactical incentive of both major powers to resort to territorial aggression."

Advances in military technology had altered international relations in even more fundamental ways, virtually ruling out future confrontations between the great powers and opening the way for new forms of nonmilitary competition. According to Brzezinski, the "balance of terror" had rendered the power of the United States and the So-

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viet Union "largely non-usable." With both countries constrained by a "paralysis of power," containment was no longer relevant, and secondary powers such as China, Europe, and Japan would play an enhanced role in international diplomacy. Because the risks of confrontation were prohibitive, Robert E. Hunter of Johns Hopkins concluded that "the only real competitions that the United States and the Soviet Union will be able to permit themselves later in this decade will be in the economic realm." Indeed, he saw the world moving to "an era in which war between major states may virtually disappear."

Still another factor making containment irrelevant was the revolution in technology and communications which was thought to have created a more interrelated world order. Brzezinski, the leading exponent of this point of view, said that "an emerging global consciousness is forcing the abandonment of preoccupations with national supremacy and accentuating global interdependence." The ideological rivalry of the past had grown out of a need "for remaking a world that was both distant and largely unknown, but proximity and global congestion now dictate revolutionary diversity." He saw America becoming involved with "the less political and more basic problems" facing mankind, "emphasizing ecology rather than ideology" and encouraging the spread of "a more personalized rational humanist world outlook that would gradually replace the institutionalized religious, ideological, and intensely national perspectives that have dominated modern history."*

THE transformation of international politics by new global forces was not the only reason given to explain why containment was no longer necessary. Even more significant was the idea that the Soviet Union had become a status-quo power and was now genuinely committed to détente with the United States. Marshall Shulman acknowledged that détente offered "tactical advantages" to the Soviet Union, but he felt that "more fundamental" factors—among them the Soviet Union's need for economic cooperation with the West, its desire to stabilize the arms race, and its fear of China—required Moscow to favor "a long-term commitment to a policy of low tension abroad."

George Kennan, whose views on this subject carried special weight because he had first enunciated the containment doctrine a quarter of a century earlier, now came to the conclusion that the military rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union no longer had any "foundation in real interests." It was kept alive, he thought, by "irrational fear" and "institutionalized force of habit" which the military-industrial complex of each big power exploited to its own advantage. If the Soviets continued to espouse revolutionary doctrines and to support revolutionary movements in the Third World, this did not mean that they had any claims against the United States or posed any threat to American interests. The Soviet Union was motivated entirely by its rivalry with China and the fear that the loss of its image as the leader of the revolutionary forces in the world "would throw into question the legitimacy of its regime at home."

Indeed, said Kennan, the Soviet posture was everywhere defensive in character, born of a profound and unappreciated insecurity. The Soviet Union was fearful of NATO which had "ringed" it with missile bases. It was fearful, too, of West Germany which resented the division of Germany and the Berlin Wall—positions Moscow was "obliged to cling to" if it was to preserve the status quo in Eastern Europe. It could not loosen its grip on Eastern Europe for fear that this would "set up liberationist ripples that would carry into the Soviet Union itself." Nor could it return the Kuriles to Japan for fear that it would "make itself vulnerable to similar demands for readjustment of borders in Europe." The Soviet Union's "sense of weakness" was such that it could not even tolerate the expression of dissent at home by "a relatively small and helpless band of intellectuals."†

Surely the worst thing one could do in dealing with such a country would be to increase its sense of insecurity by acts which it might construe as unfriendly and provocative. As Shulman pointed out, too much pressure for internal liberalization would only "reinforce" the regime's siege mentality, and make it take a harder line against the dissidents. And too much pressure on its external positions, in the name of containment, would only create the very danger which containment was supposed to defend against.

Kennan did not doubt, for example, that "we have taught the Soviet leadership something of our own obsession with military strength—have taught them, that is, to think in American-Pentagon terms—have caused them, too, to be hypnotized by the nuclear weapons race." This view was shared by Paul Warnke, who felt that America's "words and actions" were "admirably calculated to inspire the Soviet Union to spend its substance on military manpower and weaponry." Reviewing the history of containment, Richard J. Barnet noted how "ironical" it was that "the strategy chosen by the U.S. to deal with the limited Soviet challenge to American supremacy may well have helped to create a Soviet Union with global interests and commitments."

Containment, then, was counterproductive—and therefore undesirable—in addition to being

* For a fuller discussion of these themes, see Brzezinski's book, *Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era* (1970).

† These positions are spelled out in Kennan's *The Cloud of Danger: Current Realities and American Foreign Policy* (1977).

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unfeasible and unnecessary. This was true not only because it would provoke unfriendly Soviet behavior but also because it would draw the United States into situations harmful to its own best interests. As Shulman noted, the containment policy had led the United States to align itself in the Third World with conservative authoritarian regimes and to oppose "social protest movements" which were viewed as instruments of Communism. According to Bayless Manning, we had "wound up on the wrong side" of history and were held "in deep disfavor" by Third World countries which saw the United States "as the main external adversary opposing their national development, internal modernization, and economic advancement." The commitments undertaken in the name of containment on behalf of such hapless regimes led inevitably to protracted conflicts like Vietnam in which the United States sought vainly and at great cost to hold back the march of history.

The cruelest irony was that these commitments presumably had been made to help "free peoples" resist attempted subjugation, as the Truman Doctrine had pledged. In reality, of course, the peoples in question were not free, but rather subjugated by the very dictators propped up by *us*. And the help we offered, as one writer in *Foreign Policy* observed, ran the risk of destroying the very societies we hoped to save. We had embarked on these "bloody crusades" in the name of freedom, but as Brzezinski argued, the idea of equality—not liberty—was "increasingly the underlying mood and the felt aspiration in an increasingly congested world."

In this context, Manning pointed to the ultimate irony, which was that the "totalitarian regimes" we opposed were the unconscious agents of liberty in the developing world. They would "substitute a better, more efficient, more productive and widely sharing society" for what now existed, thereby making it possible at some future point for "new progressive elements . . . to build upon the social and economic gains made during the era of conscript modernization." At that point the United States might reclaim its "moral leadership" in the world, not through arms "but by virtue of its ideological example as a society of free men."

WHILE the critique of containment was intended to dissociate the new establishment from the policies of the past, it suggested as well general guidelines for the policies of the future. The first such guideline was the adoption of an attitude of "equanimity," as one writer termed it, toward changes in the world which previously would have been considered injurious to American security. Since the United States was no longer engaged in a global struggle with Communism, it was possible to dispense with linkage, a "pernicious and destructive" concept, as Warren Demian Manshel called it, which had caused us to endow local events with a purely imaginary strategic significance. U.S. policy could henceforth be based on the understanding that "American physical security," in Richard Ullman's words, "would not in any immediate sense be affected by drastic changes in the internal political structure of any other state or states."

The doctrine of equanimity had many advantages for the United States, the most obvious one being that it would eliminate the prospect of a future Vietnam. And in a larger sense, it meant that the U.S. could now adopt an attitude of "benign neglect," as Warnke and Gelb put it, "toward international military involvements." It did not follow from this, however, that the United States should be indifferent to the fate and well-being of the peoples of the Third World. On the contrary —and this was another general guideline for American policy—it was necessary for the United States to identify with and actively assist "the forces of change" which we had opposed during the period of containment.

Toward this end, Ullman urged that "a central goal of American policy over the coming years" should be to terminate the support which had previously been extended to "repressive" regimes on "expediential grounds." It was also important, wrote Tom J. Farer of Rutgers, to "soften our image as an intractable opponent of change" by making "gestures" of accommodation on three issues of paramount concern to the Third World—Southern Africa, the Palestinians, and North-South economic relations.

Beyond this, Ullman added, we would have to demonstrate our concern with "the quality of political life in other countries" by opposing repression. Here, though, we would have to recognize that "human rights are relatively culture-bound in their application." Societies like Tanzania and Yugoslavia, he cautioned, might lack democratic rights as we know them in the United States, but we were required to acknowledge that they had "achieved a certain degree of openness and tolerance, combined with genuine mass participation, within an all-embracing single-party structure."

Above all, Brzezinski wrote, American policy would have to be "sympathetically sensitive to the significant shift in global emphasis" toward equality. This would not necessarily be very costly for the United States, said Farer, since only the authoritarian elites in the Third World were demanding equality—for states, not individuals—and therefore "the overall number of people who have to be given a stake in the essential structures of the existing international economic system is relatively small." But even if one allowed that it might be costly, and many writers were of this opinion, it was still necessary for political reasons to respond sympathetically to demands for a "new international economic order."

For these same reasons, it was imperative that the United States eschew the kind of "democratic crusade" that had marred American policy during

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the period of containment and which Ambassador Daniel P. Moynihan had launched once again at the United Nations. Brzezinski warned that "for Americans to inject into American external relations the ideological claim that the contemporary world struggle is between liberal democracy and various forms of despotic statism" would "create a doctrinal coalition against the United States" and accelerate the country's "global isolation." Moynihan's criticism of Communist and Third World despotisms appealed to many Americans because it offered "a welcome escape from complexity, even if in the guise of isolated self-righteousness." But it encouraged a "siege mentality" which could destroy the "optimism and universalism" which were "the underlying basis of legitimacy of the American system as a whole." At any rate, America would be "compelled gradually to accommodate itself" to the international realities. The only real question was "how long it will take . . . to absorb and internalize a reasonably coherent yet necessarily flexible conceptual understanding of the emerging new world."

For Stanley Hoffmann, "a vindictive defense of our system of freedom," which was how he characterized Moynihan's "democratic crusade," was dangerous not just because of what it would do to America but because "it would wreck any chances for world order." Therefore America had to "curb" its own "aggressive nationalism," even as it sought to accommodate itself to hostile foreign nationalisms. To promote world order, it was necessary to "stress what is minimally objectionable," to smooth down "the cutting edge of one's own ideology," and not to put forward "proposals that will certainly arouse the hostility of all those who do not share America's preference for liberal democratic regimes." Moreover, "in the realm of conflict par excellence we must seek the cooperation of our rivals, and be ready to oppose our allies and clients when they pursue policies that run counter to the interests of world order."

Hoffmann recommended that the United States follow a general "rule of non-collision." As a guideline for American policy in the post-Vietnam period, such a rule had great appeal even to those who did not fully appreciate the subtleties of Hoffmann's "world-order" approach. This was especially true with respect to relations with the Soviet Union, where the risk of nuclear confrontation was a factor that had to be considered. Here the doctrine of equanimity was particularly useful, for it allowed one to support a "strategy of conflict-avoidance," as one writer called it, without any apparent strategic cost. Thus, articles in both *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy* argued that the placement of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba in 1962 and the construction there of a submarine base in 1970 had only "symbolic" significance, and that the United States could have avoided dangerous crises over these Soviet initiatives by "showing rational or even naive unconcern" and simply dismissing "the issue of resolve." Both articles, in fact, maintained that the United States should have welcomed the construction of the Soviet submarine base, since this would have stabilized the strategic balance by allowing Moscow to complete its sea-launched deterrent.

On the whole, though, major difficulties with the Soviet Union were not anticipated. Ullman, for example, did not even mention U.S.-Soviet relations in the eight guidelines for American policy he published in 1976. Zygmunt Nagorski, Jr., then on the staff of the Council on Foreign Relations, looked forward to "a gradual converging of commercial and developmental interests between East and West" taking place beneath "the umbrella of parity of strength." If America did nothing to arouse Soviet fear and animosity, cooperation between the two superpowers seemed assured. "How to deal with the Communist world," Brzezinski wrote, "remains a key problem for U.S. foreign policy but it may no longer represent the central problem."

Beyond improving relations with the Third World, the new priority for American policy was "trilateralism," by which was meant the deepening of cooperation among the United States, Europe, and Japan in order to create what Brzezinski termed "a stable core for global politics." Marina v. N. Whitman, then at the University of Pittsburgh, called for "the replacement of leadership based on hegemony with leadership based on persuasion and compromise," a statement that was widely quoted because it summed up so succinctly the new approach that was needed. This approach also had to generate support at home, which was why it could not be, as Brzezinski described Kissinger's policy, "covert, manipulative, and deceptive in style . . . committed to a largely static view of the world, based on a traditional balance of power." American policy had to become more open, compassionate, and committed to reform, for only in this way would it be capable of "tapping the moral resources of the American people."

Writing in *Foreign Policy* in 1973, Godfrey Hodgson had concluded his reflections on the demise of the old establishment by raising the possibility that "in time a new establishment will form from among those who are able to take as their starting point that the Vietnam war was a disaster." Were such a new establishment to emerge, its "essential moral" would be "that it is much more difficult and dangerous to use force in support of foreign-policy objectives than you might suppose."

In fact, by 1975 this very establishment had come into existence, constituting what Hoffmann called "a kind of expectant establishment in exile." It had conceived and enunciated an elaborate perspective on American foreign policy. And

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it was in possession of an organizing principle every bit as compelling after Vietnam as containment had been after Munich and the lowering of the Iron Curtain in Europe. This principle was anti-containment, or the non-use of force in world affairs.

A distinctive feature of this new establishment was its optimism, which stood out in such vivid contrast to the pessimism of those, like Henry Kissinger and Daniel P. Moynihan, who were troubled over what they perceived as the retreat of American power and the loss of political will throughout the West. For Richard Holbrooke, then managing editor of *Foreign Policy*, this pessimism was based on nothing more than the willful defeatism of those who regretted the loss of American "hegemony" and failed to appreciate the growing opportunities for American leadership in a changing world. America had no "need to dominate the world in order to live safely in it," he wrote, and anyway the United States was "still the most powerful nation on earth." It was true that the world's perception of American retreat was a problem, but this was the work of those who promoted a defeatist view and then confirmed their own conclusions by trying to get us involved in a futile and strategically irrelevant war in Angola. The country was strong and its world position secure. It could "survive everything but its own defeatism."

The pessimism decried by Holbrooke could be traced to America's defeat in Vietnam. But for Manshel, the end of the war was a source of hope. Writing in the immediate aftermath of the Communist takeover of Saigon, he saw America "entering a new era, free at last of the drain of overinvolvement and overcommitment to a cause never winnable (and never worth winning) in an area marginal to the strategic interests of the United States." America could now look to the future with renewed confidence, for "with the quixotic lance [of Vietnam] broken, the shield of the republic is stronger today than it was when the Vietnam debacle began a decade and a half ago."

This optimism, and the perspective underlying it, was in danger of being engulfed by the alarm which swept the country following the collapse of Indochina in 1975. According to Gelb and Lake, congressional liberals who should have known better had succumbed to administration arguments that the Mayaguez affair was "a test case of American resolve around the world" and that "the size of the defense budget is a vital signal of American will." These liberals were too "uncertain of themselves on foreign policy" and felt too vulnerable to "the charge of isolationism" to offer any meaningful alternative to the administration's policies. Thus the only hope was to "wait till next year for broad movement toward a sensible foreign policy."

Here the prospects were indeed bright. Recent poll data, Brzezinski reported, showed "a public opinion that is ambivalent but constructively malleable." This "heightened the need for national leadership that was capable of defining politically and morally compelling directions to which the public might then respond."

Thomas L. Hughes, the president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which published *Foreign Policy*, was "positively euphoric." The moment had arrived, he announced, for the emergence of a new "liberal-populist" governing coalition which looked "inward to the traditional pursuit of redistributing the affluence of an inequitable America" and "outward to . . . a constructive new American accommodation with mankind." Like "the Truman-Acheson arrangement" of a generation earlier, it would unite the foreign-policy elite with "the plain people," the chief difference being that the new coalition would be disposed "toward global as well as domestic accommodations." In foreign policy, such a new coalition would confirm and enlarge the "new East-West strategic bargains" and strike "new North-South bargains." It would rescue the country from the morally corrosive domestic effects of Kissinger's *Realpolitik* and the dangerously defeatist international consequences of Moynihan's "opposition to the world." It would succeed in "restoring our own self-confidence and the confidence of others in us" and in "re-establishing the steadiness of policy by moderating the crisis of authority within the American government." Such a coalition, in short, would "rise to the global occasion on the ashes of an unhappy decade of American history."

HUGHES'S article, which appeared in *Foreign Policy* in the fall of 1975, correctly anticipated the results of the forthcoming election. The victory of Jimmy Carter produced *exactly* the kind of "liberal-populist" governing coalition which Hughes had foreseen. It was exemplified, as it were, in the "Carter-Vance arrangement," wherein a Southern President who campaigned as a populist staffed his foreign-policy bureaucracy with members of the Eastern foreign-policy establishment, or, more precisely, the *new* foreign-policy establishment.

In addition to Vance, who shared the new outlook on foreign policy even if he had not publicly expounded it, those receiving high appointments in the Carter administration included Brzezinski, who became the President's national security adviser; Warnke, who was made both the director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the chief negotiator for SALT; Shulman, who was appointed the State Department's chief adviser on Soviet policy; and Gelb, Lake, and Holbrooke, who became, respectively, the director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs at the State Department, the director of policy planning, and the Assistant Secretary for East Asian Affairs. There were many other key appointments of this

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kind, among them Andrew Young as United Nations Ambassador, Richard Moose as Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, and David Aaron and Robert Hunter as members of the National Security Council. These were only a representative handful of the appointments which brought members of the new foreign-policy establishment into the Carter administration.

Not only did the President turn to the new establishment to manage his foreign policy as earlier Presidents had turned to the old establishment, but he adopted in every important respect its political perspective and even its rhetoric. The President's famous Notre Dame speech of May 1977, in which he first described his administration's foreign policy, was a perfect synthesis of the ideas propounded by the new establishment during the preceding years. The speech began with the core idea of the new establishment, the rejection of containment. It was this policy, flowing from an "inordinate fear of Communism," that had led us "to embrace any dictator who joined us in our fear" and "to adopt the flawed principles and tactics of our adversaries." The result was a "sapping of worldwide faith in our policy" and "a crisis of confidence, made even more grave by the covert pessimism of some of our leaders."

Such pessimism, Carter explained, was based on an outdated view of the world—the "belief that Soviet expansion must be contained." But now "The unifying threat of conflict with the Soviet Union ha[d] become less intensive," and "new global questions of justice, equity, and human rights" had come to the fore. "It is a new world," the President said, "but America should not fear it." We now had "a new foreign policy" capable of responding "to the new reality of a politically awakening world." Rather than "expect that the other 150 nations will follow the dictates of the powerful," we would now try "to inspire and to persuade and to lead." Our policy would be one of "constructive global involvement," committed to human rights, détente, cooperation among the industrial democracies, and a new relationship with the nations of the Third World, with whom we would work closely "in a common effort as the structure of world power changes." We would "encourage all countries to rise above narrow national interests and work together to solve such formidable global problems" as hunger, racial hatred, and the arms race, patiently attempting "to create a wider framework of international cooperation suited to the new historical circumstances."

IF THERE had been any doubt that the new foreign-policy establishment was now in power, the Notre Dame speech made it official. Thus while Carter as President must of course be held accountable for his own administration, this new establishment must take at least an equal share of responsibility for the course of American foreign policy under its conceptual guidance and practical management. Indeed, the new establishment's responsibility is all the heavier for its having broken so unequivocally with thirty years of historical experience. Had the new establishment claimed at least some continuity with the past, it might now be in a position to argue that its ideas and policies were not the only ones being tested but also the ideas and policies of its predecessors. But it claimed no such continuity. It rejected everything that had gone before, even including the conduct, if not the concept, of détente. By holding others so harshly to account, the new establishment invited strict accountability for itself.

What such an accounting reveals after a test of more than three years is an appalling deterioration in every area in which the new establishment so brashly predicted dramatic progress—in our relations with the Third World, in our relations with our allies, and most serious of all in our relations with the Soviet Union.

That our relations with the countries of the Third World are significantly worse today than they were when the new establishment took power is clear from the vehement anti-Americanism of the "nonaligned" conference in Havana last year and the mobs in the streets of Teheran. An equally vivid indication of the declining American position in the Third World is the growing anxiety of many countries that once considered the U.S. a trustworthy friend. The comment in the New York *Times* by a high Pakistani official that "you Americans don't seem to understand the world any more" reflects the thinking of many pro-Western leaders in the Third World who are losing faith in the capacity or even willingness of the United States to resist Soviet expansion. Such thinking explains the increasing tendency among these countries to keep a safe distance between themselves and Washington and to move toward an accommodation with Moscow.

U.S. relations with our "trilateral" partners, Europe and Japan, have deteriorated just as badly. The specter of neutralism now hangs over Europe as West Germany moves steadily closer to a separate accommodation with Moscow. As for Japan, before leaving on a visit to the United States in early May, Prime Minister Ohira said that "the U.S. has become one of the powers and not a superpower any more. The days are gone when we were able to rely on America's [nuclear] deterrent." Such anxieties have not been expressed publicly until now, though they are known to represent the thinking of many leaders in Europe as well as Japan. They indicate an increased distrust of the U.S. which threatens the very survival of the postwar Western alliance.

Finally, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union are as bad as they were at any point during the cold war and far more dangerous, considering the disarray in the Western camp,

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the collapsing American position in the world, our new strategic vulnerability, the shift in the military balance toward the Soviet Union, and its consequently growing readiness to achieve its objectives through the decisive use of force. The application of the doctrine of equanimity to the 1978 Communist coup in Afghanistan did not prevent the Soviet invasion a year-and-a-half later. The unilateral cancellation of U.S. weapons programs did not have any noticeable effect on the Soviet military build-up. "Getting on the side of change" in Africa did not stop the Soviet Union and its proxies from intervening in Ethiopia. And following the rule of non-collision in the case of the Soviet brigade in Cuba, or the earlier installation there of Soviet MIG-23 attack planes, did not encourage Cuba to restrain its subversive and terrorist activities in Central America and the Caribbean.

An administration that began by assuming it could improve relations with the Soviet Union if only it downplayed East-West issues is now obsessed with such concerns. Having repudiated an illusory American hegemony, it now faces the real danger of Soviet hegemony—a prospect it is trying desperately to elude by restoring a balance of power, something it once considered outdated and "Machiavellian" and whose workings it still does not seem to understand. And though it founded its entire foreign policy—its very conception of America's world role, in fact—on the rejection of containment, it has discovered to its dismay that the Soviet Union has not abandoned that ambition for conquest which made containment necessary in the first place. If anything, Moscow's policies are much more clearly threatening now than during the cold war, for the Soviets have been emboldened by the change in the balance of power to proclaim that henceforth the Brezhnev Doctrine will be extended to countries (like Chile under Allende and perhaps Nicaragua under the Sandinistas) where Communists are trying to consolidate power, not merely to retain power already established.

THOUGH the foreign-policy perspective of the new establishment has been thoroughly discredited by events, it has not yet been honestly reevaluated or clearly repudiated by any of its proponents, including the President.

In his State of the Union Address in 1979, Carter assured the nation that "our military defenses are strong" and that no superpower—by which he meant the Soviet Union—could or would "dominate the world." He added: "We have no desire to be the world's policeman, but America does want to be the world's peacemaker." It was a classic evocation of the post-Vietnam mentality, stunningly out of touch with the times. Yet, later that same year, in a speech calling for an increase in military spending, the President said that the postwar consensus built "around the concept of an active role for America in preserving peace and security for ourselves and for others" had endured, "despite all the changes that have swept across the world in the past thirty years."

The vast intellectual gulf separating these two statements—one rejecting the role of "policeman," the other endorsing the policy of containment—can be bridged only by an admission of error. But except for Brzezinski's apparent rediscovery of the containment doctrine and the President's offhand comment that his view of Soviet intentions changed "drastically" after the invasion of Afghanistan, such an admission has not been forthcoming. The appointment as the new Secretary of State of Edmund Muskie, a man identified with the first statement and not the second, indicates that, despite its claim to the contrary, the administration has still not overcome its "Vietnam complex."

It is perhaps understandable that a President running for reelection should not admit that the foreign policy of his administration has been profoundly mistaken and that the country's security is now in grave jeopardy. Yet not even among members of the new establishment who are not part of the Carter administration, or who have retired from it, has there been any discernible readiness to reevaluate their perspective. Their independence, in fact, has had quite the opposite effect. That is, it has freed them to shift the blame for the nation's predicament from their own ideas and policies to Carter's alleged incompetence—as if what is at issue were not a flawed conception of the world but rather the gifts of the technician charged with carrying it out.

This tactic began to be applied early on. For example, Hoffmann (who has held no office under Carter) attributed the administration's difficulties during 1977 to its lack of a "comprehensive plan" for the conduct of its policies. Its approach was too "nonpolitical" and "technocratic," meaning that it suffered from having no perspective rather than a mistaken one. Thomas L. Hughes (who has also remained outside) conceded that the administration had a perspective—a correct one, too—but lacked the skill to implement it. "The administration's foreign-policy failures to date," he wrote in mid-1978, "are not the result of an excess of liberalism. They are failures of the central organizing forces of the administration."

In addition to blaming Carter for inconsistency and ineptitude, the new establishment responded to Soviet advances by excusing Soviet behavior and blaming the United States for the impasse in relations. Thus, writing in *Foreign Affairs*, Robert Legvold, the director of the Soviet Project at the Council on Foreign Relations, saw little evidence to support the "impression of an emboldened Soviet leadership" which was "embarked on a vast alliance system in the Third World." From Moscow's point of view, it was the West which was "overwhelmingly ascendant" and on the attack

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throughout Africa and the Persian Gulf. The Soviet Union, in fact, had shown great restraint in staying out of internal conflicts in Iran, the Western Sahara, Nicaragua, and elsewhere, and by initially seeking to mediate the disputes in Angola and between Ethiopia and Somalia. Moreover, "where restraint has given way to active intervention," as in Angola and Ethiopia, "the Soviet Union has acted with caution," for it "checked to see that the coast was clear before proceeding." There was danger, to be sure, in the Soviet Union's "extemporaneous, unplotted entanglement" in the Third World, but no evidence that the Soviet leaders were "thinking systematically about these issues."

The great need, Legvold continued, was "to spell out the standards of behavior both sides expect of each other," and here the United States was at fault. We could not expect "the Soviet Union to give up the right to involve itself in troubled areas, if we are not prepared to give up this right ourselves." Furthermore, it was one thing to want the Soviet Union to stay out of local conflicts, but quite another to say that it could "not go to the aid of governments established by insurgent movements once they are installed." A realistic policy would recognize that "neither side will readily yield the right to intervene in troubled areas." At the same time, however, the Soviet leaders want "to give the overall competition stability and predictability," and they "are ready to begin a serious discussion, provided our purpose is not simply to upbraid them."

If Legvold identified the one-sidedness of the United States as the source of the problem, Hoffmann narrowed it still further. In his opinion, the crucial factor in the deterioration of U.S.-Soviet relations was those elements in the United States which adhered to "a new orthodoxy that identified the present American plight as the result of a retreat before an ascending Soviet steamroller." The goal of Soviet policy was not "world domination" but only "achieving equality with the United States." While the Soviet Union might relentlessly seek to expand its power, it had not been nearly so successful as was imagined. In any event, both powers, despite the competitive aspects of their relationship, had "a joint interest in moderation" deriving from their "common concern for survival and for development and economic well-being." The paramount task facing both of them, therefore, was to "organize the coexistence of competitive strategies" by defining the "common rules" by which they would abide. Those committed to the "new orthodoxy," in their nostalgia for "lost supremacy," were undermining this effort to stabilize relations at every turn—by linking arms-control talks to extraneous political issues, by opposing expanded trade relations between the two countries, by interjecting the human-rights issue into U.S.-Soviet relations, and by creating opportunities for Soviet expansion through their support of weak anti-Communist regimes (whose inevitable collapse then reinforced the erroneous and dangerous view that America was in retreat). The effect of their obstructive behavior and anti-Soviet "grandstanding" was to feed "Soviet paranoia" and to make U.S.-Soviet confrontation more likely.

Hoffmann's argument, which was composed shortly before the invasion of Afghanistan, rested entirely upon the unexamined assumption that the Soviet leaders shared *his* understanding of *their* interests and intentions. The invasion may have forced the President to change his mind about Soviet intentions, but not Hoffmann—though it did shake his confidence a bit. An article he published shortly after the invasion was filled with "murky questions" (Was the invasion an offensive or a defensive move? Did the Soviets act out of a sense of *their* weakness or a perception of *our* weakness?), and desperate affirmations ("There is no substitute for peaceful coexistence; and it can only be obtained if the Soviet Union is not pushed into a corner or locked into a position of implacable hostility"), and concluded with the confession that his function was not to define policy but simply "to question, to wonder, and to warn."

But not even that degree of wavering has been apparent among other ideologues of the new establishment. Instead of reexamining their assumptions, they have insisted upon them more strongly than ever. Claiming that the crisis created by the invasion had increased "the urgency of arms control," Warnke criticized the administration's "emotional pursuit of security through military means" and called for the implementation of the SALT treaty without Senate ratification. Decrying the "self-generated hysteria" in the country, Gelb called upon the United States to initiate a "dialogue" with Moscow and to indicate our desire for "normal" relations by ratifying SALT. And Kennan, still faithful to his belief that insecurity is the key to Soviet behavior, promoted the idea that the invasion was a "defensive" move that was not nearly as worrisome as the "militarization of thought and discourse" in Washington.

If such statements gave the impression that the United States and not the Soviet Union had caused the crisis, this was not unintended, for it was an article of faith within the new establishment that the Soviet invasion was a natural consequence of the growing opposition to détente within America.

Arguments of this kind were dangerously deluding before the invasion of Afghanistan, but they were inexcusable—both morally and politically—in its aftermath. They were also completely unpersuasive to the vast majority of the American people, a point implicitly acknowledged by the new establishment's final argument—that the President's poor handling of Afghanistan (and Iran)

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could be explained by his capitulation to political pressures in an election year when he should have been taking the sober diplomatic advice of Cyrus Vance. Gelb perceived "a classic clash of philosophies" between a politicized White House looking for immediate results and a professional State Department patiently trying to work out "the knotty problems of international politics."

But it will not be so easy for the new establishment to disclaim responsibility for the fearful disarray of American foreign policy. If the President appears to be inept, it is because events have shattered his original interpretation of the world—which was not his alone but that of the new establishment as well—and he is now left without a fixed compass, guided by nothing save his reading of the public mood. And if he has attempted to manipulate this mood to his domestic political advantage, even at the expense of the national security—a pattern one sees in his handling of the hostage crisis, to which he has subordinated all strategic concerns, including Afghanistan—this too may be traced back to the new establishment. For it was the new establishment that devalued the importance of national-security concerns in the first place, saturating American foreign policy with defeatism masquerading as optimism and "maturity" and "restraint," cravenly following international political fashion even if this meant denigrating the interests and values of one's own country, and worrying less about American security than about Soviet insecurity, in the name of which virtually any Soviet action could be condoned or blamed upon the United States.

As all the polls reveal, the American people have now overwhelmingly rejected the ideas of the new establishment. Apart from having been exposed as mistaken in all its major judgments, the new establishment never spoke for the country as a whole but only for a narrow if influential sector of the elite which had ceased to believe in America after Vietnam, and which despite its proclaimed optimism seems to have resigned itself to the forward momentum of political forces in the world committed to America's ultimate defeat. We have already been given a foretaste of what this defeat will mean in the Communist holocaust in Indochina, the growing numbers of refugees fleeing from totalitarianism, the spreading violence in a world increasingly exposed to Soviet power, and the deepening isolation of the United States. This is not the kind of world in which Americans—or other peoples, for that matter—want to live. And it is because the new establishment has resigned itself to this fate that it no longer deserves to be listened to by anyone who still believes a better world is possible.

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Analysis Terminable

Frederick Crews

TO PEOPLE who take their cues from the intellectual fashions of academe, any speculation about the decline and fall of psychoanalsyis must seem premature or downright perverse. Freud's name, along with those of Nietzsche and Heidegger, has never evoked more automatic reverence than it does today, and the Continental thinkers, from Jürgen Habermas and Paul Ricoeur to Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan and the late Roland Barthes, who for the moment strike literary commentators as most advanced, are all Freudians in their various ways. Partisans of psychoanalysis can take comfort, furthermore, from an unabated outpouring of "applied analysis" in the form of psycholiterary, psychobiographical, and psychohistorical studies which, if not always a credit to the tradition, attest to the continuing seductiveness of Freud's ideas.

But given the diminished standing of psychoanalysis as a psychiatric modality and a theory of mind, it is questionable how much longer the Freudian vogue can last. Bodies of purportedly scientific thought, however dazzling they may be to people who take ideological inspiration from them, ultimately depend for survival on empirical support for their claims. So, indeed, do all disciplines that intend to describe and account for experience in nontranscendent terms, whether or not they aspire to be recognized as sciences. After nearly a century, psychoanalysis has received only trifling and debatable corroboration—and much devastating criticism. If that criticism has yet to make an impact on literary intellectuals, we can anticipate that even they will eventually get the point.

In America at least, there are many signs that psychoanalysis has been falling out of favor. The number of applicants for therapy and training has declined, and perspicacious Freudians have been complaining that the brightest, most scientifically creative young doctors are no longer drawn toward their specialty. One of the central concepts of Freudianism, neurosis, has been pronounced devoid of meaning by the canonical *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* of the American Psychiatric Association.[1] The authority of Freud, uniquely important to the morale of his followers, has been eroded by a flood of books detailing his logical and empirical mistakes, his frailties of temperament, and his deafness to reasonable objections. The proliferation of psychoanalytic schools and splinter groups has undermined confidence that the movement as a whole rests on commonly secured scientific grounds. Feminists have convincingly challenged the Freudian picture of their sex as condemned by anatomy to masochism and penis envy. And decisive advances in our knowledge of the waking and sleeping brain, providing revolutionary insights into dream activity, psychotic states, the localization of functions, and the chemistry of pain and pleasure, have not only supplied more reliable means of characterizing the mind, but have established an embarrassing contrast with the vacuous Freudian research tradition, which has failed to yield a single authenticated discovery.

Although these developments, taken collectively, would appear to be ominous, most psychoanalysts continue to act as if no sum of setbacks and concessions could fundamentally damage their institution. In displaying such confidence they follow Freud himself, who on diverse occasions proposed that the whole of his metapsychology could be safely discarded, that neurophysiology would one day obviate his psychological postulates, that factors beyond the purview of psychoanalysis attach people to their neuroses, and that an analyst can have little expectation of undoing a complex. Those statements contradicted promises Freud made between and after his seizures of modesty.

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[1] Critics have pointed out that the third edition of *DSM* (1980), like its predecessors, reflects political as well as medical and scientific opinion. Quite true: when smoking replaces homosexuality as a mental aberration, more of the credit must go to caucuses than to new findings. For that very reason, however, we can safely regard the *DSM*'s demotion of "neurosis" as a sign of waning psychoanalytic influence.

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To the faithful, however, they appear not as confessions of frustration or as reflections on the vigorous claims that they negate, but as signs of an enviable open-mindedness. By the same token, some analysts feel that with each new debunking of a Freudian hypothesis, their discipline makes a smaller target for future snipers.

Psychoanalysis can indeed make do without any given item of doctrine. The reason, however, lies not in the strength of its other, demonstrated, claims, but in the ambiguous state of its theory and in the public's willingness to grant that an entrenched psychiatric institution must possess a core of valid findings. That willingness is in the process of crumbling. As it does so, we can only become more acutely aware that Freud's putative science of mind lacks a firm empirical basis, is riddled with gratuitous assumptions, and relies for its prestige on therapeutic expectations that seem to be met at least as well by rival and less tortuous forms of treatment.

II

I MYSELF, among other one-time Freudians, supposed for years that the well-foundedness of psychoanalysis as a theory could be judged apart from any disallowed claims for psychoanalysis as a therapy. I professed agnosticism toward the therapy while maintaining that the theory had proved its independent merits as a psychology. Freudian theory, however, has always been tied epistemologically to the "clinical findings" of individual psychotherapy, and its many counterintuitive postulates took hold as a means of accounting for the triumphant therapeutic results claimed by psychoanalysts. If those results were to prove exaggerated, and if it were shown that the Freudian clinical situation is epistemologically compromised by the therapist's presuppositions, then the whole necessity for positing the deep structures and mechanisms of the Freudian unconscious would dissolve.

The therapeutic claims of psychoanalysis, it must be understood, are *differential*. That is, Freudians maintain that their regimen, by far the most expensive and time-consuming of some two hundred competing therapies, demonstrates its value by effecting permanent improvements, as opposed to the mere symptomatic relief, or even outright "symptom substitution," that results from quicker treatments. The idea is that psychoanalysis alone roots out the source of the patient's suffering by giving him conscious access to his long-repressed traumatic experiences in the first years of life.[2] Although not every psychoanalyst feels confident enough to make that boast, every orthodox practitioner depends on it for his livelihood. For if one therapy worked about as well as another, only people with severely impaired reasoning, or with motives other than a wish to be speedily cured, would choose the one that is most disruptive of their budgets and of their work schedules.

Because of intrinsic difficulties in comparing long-term outcomes of diverse therapies, one cannot say for certain whether any modality is superior to another. It is significant, however, that existing studies, even when they have made no allowance for the vastly longer duration of Freudian treatment, have failed to note any meaningful advantage of that treatment over its myriad competitors.[3] Researchers have established a likelihood that psychoanalysis *and all other psychotherapies* are statistically better than no intervention at all, but this scarcely constitutes an endorsement of Freudianism. On the contrary, if all psychotherapies were to be judged about equally effective, psychoanalysis would rank as the least efficient of therapies, bar none. As for "symptom substitution," it appears to be at least as common in former patients of psychoanalysis as in others. Indeed, it pervades Freud's own case histories, which are to a remarkable extent a record of confessed or implied failure.[4]

More importantly, the tentatively supported equivalence of therapeutic outcomes places in jeopardy the claim of psychoanalysis *to succeed because its psychological theory is singularly correct.* An overwhelmingly plausible alternative view is that all therapies succeed, insofar as they do, for reasons other than the unique causal factors specified in their accompanying theories. It is easy to imagine such reasons—for instance, that patients who seek therapy have already decided to take themselves in hand, or that any explanation offered in tandem with a promise of symptom relief can be happily embraced, or simply that a hired

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[2] In Anna Freud's words, "In competition with the pyschotherapies [analysts] are justified to maintain that what they have to offer is unique, i.e., thoroughgoing personality changes as compared with more superficial symptomatic cures." *Difficulties in the Path of Psychoanalysis* (International Universities Press, 1969), p. 17.

[3] See Lester Luborsky, Barton Singer, and Lise Luborsky, "Comparative Studies of Psychotherapies: Is It True That 'Everyone Has Won and All Must Have Prizes'?" *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 32 (1975), pp. 995–1008; Leo Goldberger, Roger Reuben, and George Silberschatz, "Symptom Removal in Psychotherapy: A Review of the Literature," *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Science*, 5 (1976), pp. 513–536; and Allen E. Bergin and Michael Lambert, "The Evaluation of Therapeutic Outcomes," in Sol L. Garfield and Allen E. Bergin, *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change: An Empirical Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Wiley, 1978), pp. 139–189.

[4] Freud, according to two sympathetic observers, "never presented any data, in statistical or case form, that demonstrated that his treatment was of benefit to a significant number of patients he himself saw," and he "chose to demonstrate the utility of psychoanalysis through descriptions of largely unsuccessful cases." See Seymour Fisher and Roger P. Greenberg, *The Scientific Credibility of Freud's Theories and Therapy* (Basic Books, 1977), pp. 285, 281.

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friend is better than none.[5] In short, theories that enter into therapies probably do so in the function of welcome placebos. If so, the theories not only remain unsubstantiated by therapeutic success; they are positively erroneous in isolating curative factors that are wide of the mark.

THE fact that psychoanalysis frequently "works" is therefore less corroborative than some contented former patients think it is. Faith healing "works," too, as Freud ruefully acknowledged in deferring to the superior results achieved at Lourdes. Just as a successful laying on of hands demonstrates nothing about Christ's mercy, so the propositional content of psychoanalysis remains undemonstrated by a successful case history—or by any number of them. If psychoanalysis is to justify its distinctly exotic theory, it must show that the unique features of that theory are well authenticated by facts that do not lend themselves to any simpler explanation.

Unfortunately, however, the situation that produces nearly all psychoanalytic evidence—the clinical interview—is epistemologically contaminated to an extreme degree. It would be hard to find a data-gathering arrangement less conducive to the empirical ideal of neutralizing the investigator's bias. Psychoanalysts, like other therapeutic practitioners, perceive their patients through the categories of the theory that outsiders regard as questionable—and the theory in this instance is notorious for its encouragement of premature conclusions. A Freudian can as readily find "evidence" of libidinal cathexes and repressed imagos as a Jungian can locate the anima, the shadow, and the persona. Neither group, we can be sure, will ever stumble across "evidence" for the existence of the other's postulated entities.

Freudian analysts would have us believe that their patients get better because they have raised repressed memories to consciousness and achieved a maturing insight into their formerly buried conflicts. But as Freud himself sometimes feared, there are indications that some of the materials eventually "recovered" from a patient's "repressed unconscious" may be artifacts of insistent suggestion on the analyst's part. Doubts have been raised as to whether the memory impressions of early infancy survive *at all*[6]—to say nothing of whether they possess pathogenicity for outbreaks of neurosis several decades later. Moreover, in the words of two pro-Freudian but understandably troubled reviewers of research, "Investigators have found that individuals will enthusiastically accept bogus interpretations as accurate descriptions of their own personalities."[7] Other researchers have found experimental evidence suggesting that introspective confirmation of the causes of one's own thoughts and feelings is beyond the capacity of exceptional as well as ordinary people.[8] Without such confirmation from the patient, an analyst's inferences that certain early traumatic experiences were pathogenic must remain conjectural. Putting these considerations together with the failure of psychoanalysis to indicate any substantial advantage over other treatments, we can say that no grounds whatever exist for believing that recovery of the repressed is specifically therapeutic—or indeed that "the repressed" is an applicable term.

In linking therapeutic success to indifferent or spurious factors, psychoanalysis is no more disingenuous than any number of therapies that invite their clients to merge with the collective unconscious, regress to infancy, relive their births, or identify their previous incarnations. It does stand out, however, as the therapy that places fundamental stress on *analysis of the resistance*. The resistance in question issues in a reluctance to accept the therapist's most assured guesses about the patient's psychodynamics and their relation to "remembered" or reconstructed infantile experiences. Thus, the patient's balking at interpretive hints that may be misguided or even silly is taken as a sign of resurgent conflict with parents and siblings. The dissolving of this allegedly atavistic uncooperativeness—a recalcitrance which may in fact attest to the patient's unsurrendered common sense—is considered to be the analyst's infinitely painstaking task. Uniquely among recipients of psychotherapy, then, the Freudian client has his treatment prolonged and pays handsomely for the privilege of having some of his objections set aside, even though they may have been entirely warranted.

If psychoanalysis, as its most fervent supporters have said, really is "the" cure for personality disorders, we must wonder why it has confined its benefits to the relatively healthy as well as the relatively affluent. The best indicators for success as a psychoanalytic patient, according to the Freudian investigators already cited, are "youth, education, intelligence, motivation, time, money, and a relative lack of profound personality disturbance."[9] Yet even among this elite, psychoanalysis has not been able to show differentially impressive results. And it has on its books an exceptional share of the walking wounded. Everyone around the Freudian community knows patients who have become addicted to their analyses, clinging to a fruitless,

[5] Why does the contest between psychotherapies appear to end in a massive dead heat? "The most potent explanatory factor is that different forms of psychotherapy have major common elements—a helping relationship with a therapist is present in all of them, along with other related, nonspecific effects such as suggestion and abreaction" (Luborsky *et al.*, p. 1006).

[6] See Jerome Kagan, *Change and Continuity in Infancy* (Wiley, 1971), and "The Baby's Elastic Mind," *Human Nature*, January 1978, pp. 66–73.

[7] Fisher and Greenberg, p. 364.

[8] See Richard E. Nisbett and Timothy Wilson, "Telling More Than We Can Know: Verbal Reports on Mental Processes," *Psychological Review*, 84 (1977), pp. 231–259.

[9] Fisher and Greenberg, p. 303.

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financially draining dependency for ten, fifteen, or even twenty years without being either "cured," discharged as incurable, or referred to another form of treatment. Although Freud himself, in his late, pessimistic paper "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," recommended the setting of an arbitrary concluding date for stubborn cases, a significant number of analysts have dealt with their own protracted failure by calling the patient's efforts incomplete and by represcribing the very medicine that had failed to take effect.

III

WHEN we turn from the state of the therapy to that of the theory, we find that the taint of subjectivism is pervasive. The problem begins with Freud, who took little care for self-consistency and whose writings, in the assessment of one distinguished psychoanalyst, were "formulated in a bewilderingly unsystematic way."[10] Because he believed, furthermore, that the clinical dialogue provided all the testing of hypotheses that scientific rigor could require, Freud continually overrated the empirical basis of his ideas—even to the point of maintaining that he had confounded genetic theory by discovering in his patients inherited memory traces from the dawn of civilization. Although few of his followers have accepted that judgment, nearly all of them have shared in the naive methodological assumption that lay behind it—namely, the belief that hypotheses about the deepest structure of the human mind can be confirmed by what patients reveal to their analysts through "free association" and reports of dreams.

In logic, there is no need for contemporary psychoanalysts to repeat Freud's errors of fact or to emulate his overconfidence in drawing conclusions. In practice, however, analysts have not proved capable of subjecting Freud's ideas to the unsparing criticism that would typify a genuinely empirical discipline. Though most analysts differ from Freud on various particulars, they show no eagerness to confront the general, long-familiar epistemological objections to his work. The reason, we may suppose, is that their own work rests not only on Freud's scientific authority as a groundbreaker but also on the questionable rules of inference-drawing that he devised. The unwritten imperative of psychoanalytic reform is to salvage as much of Freud as possible, in appearance if not in substance. As we will see in a characteristic example, metapsychology has consequently choked itself with provisos and addenda that are meant to reverse Freud's deterministic emphasis without seeming to do so. Much of psychoanalytic thought is by now a palimpsest of hazy, mutually jostling notions, not one of which has been shown by an adequately designed empirical study to be the most likely explanation of a given phenomenon.

To be sure, some researchers who began with Freudian sympathies and who neglected to test for plausible alternatives to, say, repression and castration anxiety believe they have proved the explanatory value of such concepts.[11] Unreconstructed critics, however, have had little trouble exposing the fallaciousness of such proofs.[12] And still others have reviewed the whole standing of psychoanalysis as knowledge and found it to be nugatory. In an important series of recent articles, the eminent philosopher of science Adolf Grünbaum has inquired whether psychoanalysis meets currently accepted canons of inductivism.[13] His judgments will be gathered in a book to be entitled *Is Psychoanalysis a Pseudo-Science?* While Grünbaum does not rule out the logical possibility that some Freudian hypotheses may one day be supported, he finds that for now psychoanalysis rests on no solid evidence and that its purported clinical confirmations are open to the most fundamental doubts. Nor can we overlook the stunning pronouncement made in 1975 by the Nobel prizewinner in medicine P. B. Medawar: "[D]octrinaire psychoanalytic theory is the most stupendous intellectual confidence trick of the 20th century: and a terminal product as well—something akin to a dinosaur or a zeppelin in the history of ideas, a vast structure of radically unsound design and with no posterity."[14]

AGAINST this bleak prospect, defenders of psychoanalysis assert that forbearance is in order. Their movement, they say, is

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[10] Benjamin B. Rubinstein, "On the Clinical Psychoanalytic Theory and Its Role in the Inference and Confirmation of Particular Clinical Hypotheses," *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Science*, 4 (1975), p. 31.

[11] Observers who believe that at least a modest handful of Freudian hypotheses have been experimentally supported include Fisher and Greenberg (footnote 4 above); Paul Kline, *Fact and Fantasy in Freudian Theory* (Methuen, 1972); and Lloyd H. Silverman, "'The Reports of My Death Are Greatly Exaggerated,'" in *Science and Psychotherapy*, ed. Raphael Stern *et al.* (Haven, 1977), pp. 255–282. Although the claims advanced by these Freudians are open to challenge, their acceptance *in toto* would lend only marginal credence to general psychoanalytic theory.

[12] The *locus classicus* of Freudian investigations that rule out commonsense alternatives is a study purporting to show that, because a number of female college students dreamed of penises, the concept of penis *envy* has received significant support. The same study confirmed that women tend to dream about weddings and babies, i.e., "displaced penis envy." For an authoritative discussion of this and other poorly conceived investigations, see Hans J. Eysenck and Glenn D. Wilson, *The Experimental Study of Freudian Theories* (Methuen, 1973).

[13] See especially "Epistemological Liabilities of the Clinical Appraisal of Psychoanalytic Theory," *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought*, 2 (1979), pp. 451–526. I am indebted to Professor Grünbaum not only for several ideas in the present essay, but also for searching criticisms of my various drafts.

[14] "Victims of Psychiatry," *New York Review of Books*, January 23, 1975, p. 17.

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still young; it is as yet a "protoscience," groping with forgivable clumsiness toward an adequate framing of its discoveries. We are asked to look forward to a time when conscientious Freudians will have made peace with the scientific mainstream by simplifying the theory and submitting the remaining core of propositions to the most demanding empirical tests. Then, presumably, we will have avoided discarding valuable, hard-won insights along with early misconceptions. Every champion of the movement can point to a favorite branch of revisionism that has supposedly made a good beginning toward this goal.

After nine decades of sectarianism and self-isolation from the broader scientific community, however, psychoanalysis would hardly seem to be "proto" anything. The record to date suggests that when analytic theorists undertake to replace one of Freud's implausible ideas, they do so without benefit of methodological safeguards against further error. Unlike demonstrably empirical discoveries, furthermore, psychoanalytic reforms rarely bring the warring Freudian factions together; nearly every change has meant a further sundering, a new occasion for dogmatic belief within a subset of the faithful. This fission has been caused, not by the exuberant youthfulness that Freudians ascribe to their discipline, but by the fact that it is not, strictly speaking, a discipline at all. That is to say, psychoanalysis as usually elaborated eschews the means of discriminating warrantedly between rival hypotheses about mental functioning and paths to symptom removal. As for the "hard-won insights" that we should hesitate to dismiss, most of those that may actually possess merit were current before Freud's time and will presumably remain accessible in the future.[15]

Two factors condemn innovative Freudian metapsychologies to the subjectivism that yields one unresolvable quarrel after another. The first is that psychoanalytic reformers have only their own taste to guide them in deciding which metapsychological concepts to perpetuate and which to challenge. Notions like "id" and "oedipus complex" and "pleasure principle" take their meaning from a network of postulates that generate no straightforward behavioral consequences. Thus the presence or absence of such consequences in a given instance cannot serve as a test of theoretical adequacy. On the contrary, the elasticity of Freudian interpretive rules, whereby any phenomenon can bear either its manifest meaning or an opposite meaning or some third, "displaced," meaning, enables every interpreter to convince himself that his concepts are backed by evidence. This absence of constraints encourages the riding of hobbyhorses instead of a principled adjudication of differences.

And second, most psychoanalytic theoreticians have relied on "findings" that will be forever unavailable to outside parties. The Freudian community retains its self-respect by assuming that the author of a paper, because he has been analyzed and officially trained, has acquired an objectivity and scrupulousness rarely found among the laity. But with the best will in the world, a Freudian innovator meets no methodological barrier against the temptation to misinterpret, embroider, or censor his essentially secret case histories. Scientific responsibility is thus lodged precariously not in the watchdog process whereby investigators check the replicability of one another's announced results, but in individuals telling self-serving anecdotes about anonymous patients. In a community operating by such rules, metapsychological innovation comes cheaply—and is prized no less cheaply by guardians of established views.

Let us suppose, however, that reformers could persuade their colleagues to do without high-level metapsychology and restrict themselves to those concepts that provide a quasi-phenomenological account of therapist-client relations—concepts such as resistance, transference, repression, and regression. Could psychoanalysis get by on that minimal basis? Some revisionists think so, but they overlook the fact that even these terms are shot through with implications about infantile sexuality, the alleged stages of libidinal development, the early-traumatic etiology of neurosis, and the analyst's privileged insight into that etiology. Psychoanalysis as a drawn-out regimen presupposes those ideas; without them, there would be no conceivable justification for the laborious and costly task of anamnesis.

If psychoanalysts wish to continue practicing under the old rules, therefore, they cannot afford to go very far toward admitting how little they really know about the mind. To most present-day analysts, Freud's system is at once reassuring in its apparent conferral of authority and embarrassing in many of its details. The analysts' best hope of preserving their elevated standing in a volatile society is to patch over the more obvious defects in classic psychoanalytic thought while continuing to maintain that they understand what causes and cures mental instability, what the basic instincts are, how sexual identity is formed, and so forth. We will see, however, that such ad hoc repair not only fails to go far enough; in some cases it makes matters worse by taxing the theory with overcomplication and by drawing attention to the flaws it is intended to cover.

IV

To examine the liabilities of psychoanalytic reform at close range, let us consider one of the most respected of contempo-

[15] See, e.g., Lancelot Law Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud* (Basic Books, 1960).

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rary theorists, Heinz Kohut. Though Kohut is less well known to laymen than a Fromm or an Erikson, among the cognoscenti he comes nearer to fitting the image of a properly *Freudian* innovator. His two major works, *The Analysis of the Self* (1971) and *The Restoration of the Self* (1977), have a large and grateful following, and recently he has acknowledged his eminence by issuing a two-volume collection of papers, graced by a 106-page introduction by Dr. Paul H. Ornstein extolling what is now said to be "the leading paradigm of psychoanalysis."[16] Needless to say, there is room for dispute of that honor; psychoanalytic theory is so easy to play variations on that anyone with a handful of followers could think he had revolutionized the field. But if Freud's couch were passed along like the throne of St. Peter, it might well find itself today in Dr. Kohut's office in Chicago.

It is not just Kohut's stature but also his deference to empirical values that makes him an appropriate figure for assessing the future of psychoanalysis. In his papers he repeatedly admonishes his colleagues against hasty conclusions and unnecessarily rigid views. He is careful to reject biological explanations of psychologically described events, and he tries wherever possible to rely on tangible phenomena rather than on abstract reconstructions. One of his main concerns within the American Psychoanalytic Association, furthermore, has been the promotion of research. And unlike some analysts, he does not hesitate to point out areas in which psychoanalysis has shown itself deficient. By manner, at least, no one would inspire more confidence in the capacity of Freudians to set their house in order.

Sadly, however, Kohut's empirical scruples turn out to be mostly cosmetic—a matter of scientistic rhetoric rather than true rigor. Psychoanalysis in its current state is already, for him, "this great new edifice of human thought" (695), "this new sun among the sciences of man" (684), "the science that reaches farthest into the breadth and depth of the human soul" (683-84), and the rightful candidate to become "man's scientific leader" (682). Nothing in his writings suggests awareness of the key defect in his "science," namely, the fact that we have typically been asked to take an analyst's word both for the raw data he reports and for the correctness of his interpretations.

On the contrary, Kohut refers with assurance to "the laboratory of psychoanalytic treatment" (523), as if analysts in their fifty-minute hours were properly testing the debatable hypotheses of Freudianism instead of applying familiar and notably compliant rules of interpretation. And when he calls for more research, he has in view not controlled studies that might determine which concepts deserve to survive, but mere consolidation and publication of what analysts have already learned "from the clinical situation" (602). To be sure, Kohut worries about bias in research—but he does so along the quaint diagnostic lines established by Freud. One researcher, he tells us, may have reacted so strongly against his early sadistic impulses that he is too compassionate to be objective (607), and another may suffer from "a libidinal hypercathexis in the visual-cognitive area" (608) and so lack balanced judgment. In Kohut's perspective, the problem of skewed results apparently vanishes as soon as the investigator has achieved "mastery and integration of infantile precursors of his research interest" (608).

I HAVE mentioned as one of the handicaps of psychoanalysis its intellectually compromising subservience to Freud. Kohut, true to his role as an enlightened adviser to the movement, discusses this very problem at some length. Analysts in training, he says, encounter Freud as "the great father-figure and teacher of our science" (796), and thus they acquire "an attitude of firmly established identification with an idealized figure (or, in reaction formation, of rebelliousness against this identification)" (796). As Kohut sees it, this confusion of emotional dependency with the scientific posture is a warping force, inducing the individual psychoanalyst either to rubber-stamp Freud's ideas or to undermine them by hitting on some gratuitous novelty to emphasize.

One might expect Kohut, therefore, to be especially wary of idolizing Freud. Such is not the case. Psychoanalysts, he announces, are lucky "because in this finite life we are able to participate in the work of one of the few geniuses of mankind, a participation which in our field appears to me to be more intimate and profound than in most other sciences" (393). As we will see, Kohut senses that his own ideas are in crucial respects opposed to Freud's; like other revisionists, he faces the psychological and rhetorical problem of diverging from the "genius" while continuing to share in his glory. The solution is to take on faith great chunks of doctrine that are not immediately at issue and to appease Freud's offended ghost with hyperbolical praise.

Thus, for example, Kohut asks why Freud thought that female sexuality is an outcome of thwarted phallic strivings rather than a natural biological development. Could it be that the master had a "circumscribed blindspot" (228) on this issue? Kohut raises the possibility only to wave it away without discussion. It must have been an admirable "reliance on clinical evidence" (228) that kept Freud from exercising common sense: "Pene-

[16] *The Search for the Self: Selected Writings of Heinz Kohut: 1950-1978*, 2 vols., ed. Paul H. Ornstein (International Universities Press, 1978), Introduction, p. 91. Subsequent parenthetical references will cite these continuously paginated volumes; all quoted italics appear in the original text.

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trating beyond the feminine attitudes and feelings of his patients, he regularly found the struggle over phallic strivings, and, *while he accepted biological bisexuality,* he rejected the postulate of a preceding psychological phase of femininity without psychological evidence for it" (228). Kohut does not allow that Freud's "penetrations" may have been tendentious, or that "evidence" supplied by indoctrinated adult patients may not necessarily be evidence of an infantile stage of development, or that Freud's acceptance of "biological bisexuality" was just as arbitrary as his decision to make penis envy the *raison d'être* of femininity. Ordinary empirical prudence must be stifled in deference to "the great father-figure and teacher of our science."[17]

More is involved in such kindness than filial homage, however. If Kohut were to grant the full extent of Freud's interpretive whimsy, he would be disavowing his own right to base conclusions about early childhood on remarks made by supine grownups. Kohut must remain convinced that psychoanalytic theory is objectively dictated by facts that impress themselves upon the clinician who is schooled to listen empathically and ponder introspectively. Indeed, Kohut is so enamored of this idea that he thinks empathy "should become the guiding ideal of all the sciences . . . the scientist's commitment to it should take the place of the pride in his methodological and technological expertness which he has felt up to now" (703). Without flinching, he tells us that "Freud's attitude concerning the development of female sexuality is only one of many examples of his faithful adherence to the introspective and empathic method of observation" (228-29). Yet neither Freud nor Kohut would be able to explain how introspection and empathy generate adequate controls for error and *idées fixes,* much less how they enable the Freudian thinker to make inferences about psychic energy, stages of infancy, various kinds of libido, oedipal and pre-oedipal fixations, and the rest of the leaden conceptual baggage that psychoanalysis carries wherever it goes. Nor could they explain why analysts, if their tools of investigation are indeed superior to those of experimental natural science, remain divided within squabbling sects, each with its boast of having corrected the others' faulty understanding of the mind.

Kohut himself is the founder of one such sect, purportedly the guardian of fundamental advances in therapy as well as theory. His contribution has been to rescue narcissism from its lowly place in Freudian thought and to endow it with its own special drive, its hitherto neglected vicissitudes (the "narcissistic disturbances"), its ideal line of normal development, and a happy ending, namely, the production of a wholeness that Kohut designates as "the self." Kohut, Ornstein, and others now regard "the psychology of the self" as a second and superior half of the great theoretical edifice begun by Freud. Until he himself came along, Kohut reflects, psychoanalysis saw only "Guilty Man," in conflict with his libidinal drives. Now we can also deal precisely with "Tragic Man," whose goal is not gratification but self-realization. At last psychoanalysis can "attempt to make contributions—*scientific* contributions—to the understanding of some of the most important activities of man, such as his religions or his art, that do not dissolve these activities into their elemental constituents and, by doing so, become blind to their essential significance . . ." (923-24).[18]

Like other Freudian explorers, Kohut tells us little about the procedures he followed in arriving at his discoveries. From what he does say, however, we can discern the outlines of a characteristic pattern. In his case as in some others, the analyst's starting point is apparently a perception of indifferent therapeutic success—a perception he keeps to himself until after the breakthrough, whereupon he becomes more or less candid about past failures, though not about present ones. Thus Kohut reveals that for some fifteen years before 1974, he had felt "increasingly stumped" (888) by as many as half of his cases. (One looks in vain for any acknowledgment of that fact in papers written during the period.) Goaded to try new ideas, the analyst decides to attach extra importance to some element of behavior or theory—in this case narcissism—that earlier investigators have overlooked or considered incidental. Then, still believing that whatever he learns from analytic sessions must be direct evidence of infantile development, he links the newly central factor to the "archaic experiences" that his patients have supposedly recovered from their repressed depths.

To the analyst's delight, everything falls into place; the patient who is destined to become the latest Dora eventually accedes to his interpretive hints and feels, presumably, that the stalled analy-

[17] Kohut does worry that Freud's theory strains credulity by asking us to believe that every little girl in the history of the world has responded with "envy, shame, rage, and denial" (785) to her genital incompleteness. Natural selection, however, comes to the rescue. Perhaps, Kohut suggests, "in the prehistorical past of the human race those females of the species who reacted with greater sensitivity to the experience that they had no penis had a higher survival rate" (785).

[18] In practice, however, Kohut treats works of art just as previous analysts have, mining them for points of likeness to his favorite ideas. He asserts, for example, that paranoia arises genetically from the incapacity of a child's "self-objects" (parents) "to mirror the child's total self," and he adds: "Kafka described this situation poignantly in *Metamorphosis*: Gregory Samsa experiences himself as nonhuman while his parents in the next room speak about him in the third person singular" (743n.). Had they spoken about "Gregory" in some other person or number, they might have been beyond even Dr. Kohut's help.

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sis must be getting somewhere at last. The treatment then proceeds according to the customary Sisyphean technique, but with an altered vocabulary and a different set of assumptions about the nature of the patient's woes, the root causes of trouble, and the signs of progress and backsliding. Certain forms of childishness on the patient's part, for example, are now considered productive, for they indicate revival of the conflicts that have just been granted theoretical preeminence.

Needless to say, the new point of view is no less spuriously confirmed by "clinical results" than the one it has supplanted. In evaluating his apparent success, the analyst is unlikely to wait until he can learn whether the "cure," if any, was only temporary. Nor will he inquire whether his own enthusiasm may have served as a placebo, or whether an extant rival theory might have yielded the same results, or whether Dora may have simply gotten older and more resigned to other people's obsessions, or whether he should take into account those patients who have resisted his new line of coaxing and have thus failed to ratify his destiny as a medical pioneer. And in writing up his scientific advance for the edification of his colleagues, he of course provides no data to support the claim of sharply increased therapeutic success. To do so would be to break with Freud's precedent and to imply that there may be something lax about the trusting atmosphere that enables each reporting analyst, whether or not he is a competent therapist, to have a turn at innovation.

Kohut is typical in another important respect as well: he does everything he can to minimize the extent of his departure from orthodoxy. As a holistic concept, Kohut's idea of selfhood is contradictory in spirit to the mechanistic, trifurcated model of mind developed by Freud. Potentially, then, Kohut is as much a schismatic as Jung, who stood Freudian theory on its head. He tells us, however, that he built his new system keeping in mind that "the new psychology of the self must remain in an unbroken continuum with traditional psychoanalytic theory to preserve the sense of the historical continuity of the group self in the psychoanalytic community" (937). For a sentimental or political reason, in other words, Kohut was determined to *insert his ideas into* the preexisting framework of metapsychology, whether or not they belonged there.

That is precisely what he did, with results that defy succinct description. Dr. Ornstein's labyrinthine introduction traces the stages of Kohut's delicate progress toward conceiving of *two* selves—in effect, one for Freud and one for Kohut. The "narrower" self, as Ornstein notes, is "embedded (albeit somewhat loosely) in a mental-apparatus psychology and ego psychology," while the broader or Kohutian one "is conceptually independent from and has moved beyond drive theory and ego psychology" (98). As a concordat with the Freudian establishment, this arrangement has much to recommend it. As a supposed psychological finding, it requires the faith of a Bernadette.

Kohut's practice, to speak bluntly, is always to throw a bone to Freud while saving the choicest, most humanistic-looking morsels of theory for himself. Thus he fully accepts Freud's account of the psychoneuroses, in which a repressed drive is seeking satisfaction, but charts as his own territory the more congenial narcissistic disorders, in which "an injured, narcissistic *ego* is seeking *reassurance*" (22). The mind, it seems, is a creaky contraption when working for Freud but a soulful being when working for Kohut. Again, instead of challenging Freud's murky idea of libido, Kohut tactfully avers that there are two kinds of libido, one leading to the traditional Freudian terminus of "object love," the other leading to self-love and onward to selfhood, a realm where the penurious economy of Freudian energy expenditure is nowhere to be seen. And if just two selves seem insufficient to placate the orthodox, Kohut is willing to supply more—provided everyone agrees that he holds the patent on the best one. "We recognize," he says,

> the simultaneous existence of contradictory selves: of different selves of various degrees of stability and of various degrees of importance. There are conscious, preconscious, and unconscious selves; there are selves in the ego, the id, and the superego; and we may discover in some of our patients contradictory selves, side by side, in the same psychic agency. Among these selves, however, there is one which is most centrally located in the psyche; one which is experienced as the basic one, and which is most resistant to change. I like to call this self the "nuclear self." (96)

As this passage suggests, there are no limits to the complication that psychoanalytic reformers will add to already dubious postulates in order to avoid an open break with tradition. So long as analysts want simultaneously to free themselves from Freud's biologism and to bask in its remaining prestige, they will continue ornamenting the stark branches of id psychology with "selves"—and with neutralized energies, and desexualized drives, and integrative functions, and conflict-free spheres of the ego—without noticing that they are creating, not a credible metapsychology, but a Rube Goldberg apparatus that bears no examinable relation to experience.

V

As everyone knows, Freud explained intellectual resistance to psychoanalysis in terms of injured human pride. His discovery that our minds are enthralled by repressed wishes, he announced without undue humility on

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his own part, was the third great blow to anthropocentrism following those administered by Copernicus and Darwin. Yet it is curious how readily many of us absorbed the putative insult and defended it as what it distinctly is not, a scientifically confirmed truth. The real question to be resolved is not why people resisted a doctrine that found in every physician a deflected sadist, in every artist a former dabbler in his own feces, in every infant a murderous and incestuous schemer, in every decent act the sublimation of a barbaric impulse. The question is rather why so many people fell cheerfully into line with these and equally lurid ideas, expounded with no more proof than the say-so of a compelling stylist.

Any answers are bound to be partial and conjectural. Yet I think we can recognize certain nonrational appeals within psychoanalysis, even if we cannot assign them relative degrees of importance. It would seem, for example, that for many intellectuals psychoanalysis has been, not a blow to human pride in general, but a means of elevating pride among a corps of privileged knowers who, by subscribing to the Freudian movement, rescue themselves from doubt and insignificance. It is as a cathartic and redemptive science that psychoanalysis has claimed our loyalty. "Normal science" is dry and impersonal, narrow in focus, and increasingly incomprehensible to the envious humanist. Psychoanalysis, by contrast, offers each of its believers a total vision that spans the entire history of our species, links biology and psychology, and unveils the innermost scandalous wishes animating heroes and ordinary folk, great works of art, and whole systems of law, philosophy, mythology, and religion. What is so humbling about that? Could Faust have asked Mephistopheles to show him much more?[19]

In part, then, we can suppose that psychoanalysis survives because it feeds extravagant intellectual hopes. It is energized not by the skeptical spirit but, as Freud knew in calling himself a conquistador, by a wish to overleap barriers and arrive at a comprehensive, countertraditional system of insight. Perhaps that is why armchair radicals, at a time when psychoanalysis as a therapy and science is in full retreat, can still base whole books on the most extreme elements of Freudian theory, such as polymorphous perversity and the death instinct. The reason they are not dissuaded by empirical criticism may be that their aim is precisely to have done with the restraining effects of empiricism. If I read them correctly, they wish to wield terms of discourse implying a realm of essence beneath and opposed to the visible world—a realm which, if we could only set it free, would work the overthrow of every tyranny of custom, tradition, and entrenched privilege. So, too, the "hermeneutic" school, which conceives of psychoanalysis only as a means of performing abstruse manipulations of texts, appears to have distilled from Freudianism its will to explanatory power while openly proclaiming the irrelevance of verification.

That sense of special power may be felt even by circumspect Freudians who eschew deep theory and try to confine themselves to such relatively accessible concepts as denial, projection, and identification. I was myself such a Freudian for a decade or so—excited yet also made wary by the prospect of holding a master key to interpretation. I remember taking comfort from the analysts' rhetoric of meticulous devotion to fact, even while I deplored some of the shortcomings I have mentioned here. To be a cautious Freudian was to have the best of both worlds: allegiance to transpersonal standards of knowledge and a head start toward certainty. Possessing that head start, or the illusion of it, a partisan of psychoanalysis will understandably hesitate to entertain more than selective doubts about his doctrine.

Finally, many veterans of therapy have their own reasons for clinging to the faith. They have had what they call confirming experiences—crystallizations of emotion, flashes of self-recognition, and enhanced insight into people or problems that had been troubling them. We need not doubt the genuineness of these catharses; the prolonged strain intrinsic to a Freudian patient's situation, combined with the analyst's disapproval of conventional, self-protective responses, probably sharpens the analysand's perceptions, however temporarily. What needs doubting is whether such experiences, which can be approximated in any number of other therapies or even in outright brainwashing, really ought to count as "confirming." Memorable though they may be, they prove nothing at all about the correctness of Freudian theory or the long-run usefulness of the therapy. Try telling that, however, to someone who thanks his analysis for his sanity and who now sees the work of id and ego everywhere, much as his counterpart a few centuries ago detected the equally confirming influence of angels and devils.

For several reasons, then, a rush of defections from the Freudian ranks seems unlikely. Yet psychoanalysis, I would expect, will fade away just as mesmerism and phrenology

[19] The replies of several pro-Freudian acquaintances to a draft of this essay have reinforced my guess about the correlation between psychoanalytic allegiance and animus against "normal science." My respondents uniformly declared that since their interest in Freudianism was not a scientific one, my animadversions about the dubious scientific status of psychoanalysis were wasted on them. They did not care to recognize that I am here criticizing psychoanalysis, not for the technicality of failing to qualify as a science, but for being so conceptually muddled and empirically dubious that it does not warrant our belief. "Science," which many Freudians conveniently confuse with materialism or positivism or behaviorism, is their straw man—an antithesis to the humanistic spirit that binds them, however irrationally, to psychoanalysis, for both Freud and humanism strike them as championing the beleaguered imagination.

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did, and for the same reason: its exploded pretensions will deprive it of recruits. If most people cannot readily forgo an entire world view that has sustained them, they find it easy enough to avoid the strange-looking intellectual fashions of another era. Psychoanalysis, once so familiar that, in Erich Heller's words, "it comes close to being the systematic consciousness that a certain epoch has of the nature and character of its soul,"[20] is in the process of becoming strange. There is no reason to believe, much less to hope, that the process will be reversed.

Whether or not my prediction is accurate, there is an immediate moral to be drawn: a concern for empirical standards should make us reconsider the habit of borrowing bits and pieces of psychoanalytic thought for ad hoc explanatory purposes. Perhaps some Freudian ideas, pried loose from their context of presumptions about mental hydraulics and libidinal development, may eventually prove to have some merit. If so, it will be because they have won a test against concepts that take less for granted and fit better with inductive sense. In the meanwhile, we would do well to struggle along without recourse to instant "depth." When we do, we will find that we have sacrificed, not complexity of understanding, but something nearly opposite: a pretended intimacy with realities that cannot be captured in the crude and monotonous language of Freudian explanation.

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[20] "Observations on Psychoanalysis and Modern Literature," in *Psychiatry and the Humanities*, ed. Joseph H. Smith, Vol. 1 (Yale University Press, 1976), p. 35.

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A Yiddish Poet in America

Ruth R. Wisse

THE decline of Yiddish in America among all Jews except the Hasidim has had important consequences, some of which have only gradually come to light. Initially, the sacrifice of Yiddish, the internal vernacular, was a relatively small price for European Jewish immigrants to pay in return for English, which gave them direct access to the material and spiritual opportunities of America. Jews, after all, have managed innumerable linguistic adaptations throughout the millennia, and while Yiddish enjoyed a longer history and fostered a richer culture than most other Jewish languages, it was only one of several Diaspora vernaculars created by Jews and subsequently, in altered circumstances, abandoned. In the modern period, wherever political emancipation promised civic equality, Jews learned and adopted the local language, always more responsive to the carrot than to the stick, to the proffered opportunity than to any punitive measures against them. Nowhere was the carrot more enticing, the promise more golden, than here in America.

Only a false nostalgia for the bad old days would suggest that the adoption of English was not worth the risk to Yiddish, or that linguistic assimilation was a cultural mistake. Nevertheless, now that American Jews have become Anglicized, one can afford to recognize the debit side of the ledger. The abandonment of Yiddish within a single generation meant the loss, not of some antique property, but of a highly developed contemporary resource, the national storehouse of consciousness and expression. Though the loss of Yiddish is often mourned sentimentally, as if some beloved grandmother had died leaving one last anecdote unrecorded, its decline is actually of more immediate and personal consequence. Yiddish is the crucible in which most of the modern Jewish experience was forged. The complexities of the Jewish encounter with modernity are recorded in Yiddish folk and formal culture and in the language itself. Without Yiddish, descendants of European Jewry are without their 19th and early 20th centuries, bereft not merely of the traditional past but of the setting of their own immediate experience.

It so happened that among the immigrants to America were many budding Yiddish writers who would use their vernacular to interpret their individual and communal reorientation, and in doing so, bring their literature to new heights of excellence. But by the time they were at their best, much of their natural audience had become actively indifferent to Yiddish, and their children even more so. Modern American Yiddish culture was left without heirs, and the heirs without a culture.

There was something remarkably raw in the immigrant dedication to the future, an abandon not usually associated with the Jews, but characteristic of them nonetheless. No one captured this hard streak in the American Jewish immigrant character more effectively than the Yiddish poet, Moishe Leib Halpern (1886-1932), who was both its exponent and victim. An uncompromising realist, Halpern recognized that the pragmatism of the Jews seeking refuge in America was the necessary cost of their legendary national talent for adaptability. Yet he recoiled from the coarseness of the immigrant struggle for survival. He did not share the immigrant optimism, the faith in a better future as a reward for present hardship. As a writer, one of that select group of immigrants for whom the native language was indispensable and nonnegotiable, Halpern saw in the weakening of Yiddish his own personal doom for which there could be no social compensation. Frayed by the practical difficulties of eking out a Yiddish writer's living, and progressively estranged from the society of transplanted Jews, Halpern exposed the most painful and desperate aspects of making a new home, both for those who successfully managed the feat and for those, like himself, who did not.

To some degree, of course, all the Yiddish writers in America were sooner or later affected by the evaporation of their language. The greater persistency and intensity of Halpern's sensitivity to the problem derived, as he was aware, from the circumstances of his childhood. Long before he came to America, an earlier process of uprooting and adaptation had already organized his contradic-

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tory feelings about belonging and estrangement. His coming to New York at the age of twenty-two followed a previous period of disorientation which foreshadowed his immigrant life.

Moishe Leib Halpern was born in 1886 in the Galician market town of Zlochow, which had been under Austrian rule since 1772, and which comprised about 10,000 inhabitants, just over half of them Jews. His father, who came from a family of merchants in Odessa, ran a local general store. In raising his only son, this traditional Jew embarked on an unusual plan. Having sent the boy to *cheder* and to a local Polish school, he then took Moishe Leib, at age twelve, to Vienna where he enrolled him in a course of applied art so as to guarantee his professional independence. Though the boy showed talent as an artist and sign painter, he thwarted his father's design by gravitating to literature. He began a study of German verse and took his own first tentative steps as a German poet. Halpern also frequented the Vienna cafés, where the arguments of the Jewish socialists and Zionists successively won his allegiance.

By the time he returned to Zlochow, at the age of twenty, he was effectively without a career and a cultural stranger to his birthplace. His boyhood friends could not follow his political arguments, delivered as they were in German or in an impossibly Germanic Yiddish. Having strong literary ambition themselves, they persuaded him that as a would-be writer he was wiser to use his native Yiddish tongue, which was anyway evolving into a lively artistic medium. Somehow the cosmopolitan finish of Vienna did not suit the indigenous cultural ferment of his birthplace, and it was he rather than his provincial school chums who gave way. He turned back to Yiddish and submitted his first poems in that language to the Galician Yiddish press.

But there was a second area of expectation in which Halpern could not comply. Some of his contemporaries were already in uniform in the Austrian army, where he would also have to serve. Rather than submit to induction, he set out for America, arriving in New York in the latter part of 1908. He had found himself a stranger in his home, and was now twice a stranger in the city of Jewish ingathering.

HALPERN'S arrival in America coincided with a great cultural upsurge on New York's Lower East Side. He became associated with a movement of fledgling writers called *Di Yunge*, the young, in deference to their audacity and innovativeness. These were young men from a diversity of backgrounds and from various cities, towns, and villages that spanned the map of Eastern Europe. Coming together in the common insecurity of immigrants and with the common ambition of becoming great writers, they stimulated one another in comradeship and competition. Most of them were without special training or profession, and the regular jobs they found to support themselves—in small factories, as house painters, newsvendors, paperhangers, waiters, even shopkeepers—eventually drained the energy required for steady writing. But there were enough among them who succeeded in bringing fame to the designation, *Yunge*: Mani Leib, the handsome lyricist from the Ukraine; Zishe Landau, poet, scion of a Polish rabbinic family; Reuven Iceland, poet, one of the chief chroniclers of the group; David Ignatoff, energetic novelist and short-story writer from the hasidic heartland of the Ukraine, who edited the group's first major publications; Joseph Rolnick, an unassuming, evocative poet of moods and landscapes; I. I. Schwartz, the most learned Jew among them, epic poet and gifted translator; Joseph Opatoshu and Isaac Raboy, experimenters in long and short forms of fiction; H. Leivick, escapee from a sentence of lifetime exile in Siberia, poet and dramatist; Moishe Nadir and Moishe Leib Halpern, from neighboring towns in Galicia, the mischievous rebels within this movement of self-declared rebels.

The group—actually, like most literary groups, an informal cluster of like-minded writers who would soon go their individual ways—was overtly rebellious only in its initial phase. Its members opposed the national and social orientation of the work of their predecessors, the commercial impulse of the Yiddish press, and the sense of communal responsibility that was expected of Jewish writers in a Jewish language. Like knights of a medieval romance, or like the Symbolists whom some of them acknowledged as models, they vowed to serve *di sheyne literatur*, belles-lettres, with pure aesthetic passion and undivided loyalty. Preferring (for the most part) poetry to prose, they turned from the public spirit of Yiddish writing to subtler, intricate explorations of the individual self in all its moods.

Although most of the young writers originally subscribed to this mild aestheticist position, they were caught up before long by local and international events, and they responded, no less than the mass of their fellow immigrants, to pressures from the very movements they had tried to resist. Several of the *Yunge* had been members of anti-czarist revolutionary organizations before coming to America. When the revolution of 1917 appeared to actualize their youthful dreams, they were inevitably affected, and in some instances moved to political alignment with Communism. Three almost simultaneous events—the eruption of World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the issuance of the Balfour Declaration—in one way or another claimed the allegiance of them all.

Halpern was generally less sociable than his literary colleagues and everyone who met him in the early immigrant years commented on the solitude which seemed particularly pronounced in him. His fellow poet, Mani Leib, recalled that "we, his friends, like all other Jewish immigrants, also bore

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the fear of this wondrous unknown called America. But somehow we . . . gave in, adapted ourselves, 'ripened' and gradually became . . . real Americans. Not Moishe Leib. He could never compromise or bend." Though he contributed to the group's many publications and little magazines, he was slightly apart from the others, the lone wolf, or, as the play on his name suggested, the brooding Lion, Moishe Leib. Almost alone among his fellow writers he failed to find steady work in the small factories, manual trades, or editorial offices where most of the others eventually made their living, and this economic precariousness, which continued practically without interruption until his death, contributed to his image as a troubling nonconformist, and to his artistic distance.

MOISHE LEIB HALPERN's poetry was as distinctive as he. Against the general mood of literary quietude and resignation, of nostalgic reminiscence and submissiveness, Moishe Leib was strident and mocking, equally impatient with the past and the present. His verse sought out the disjunctive rhythms and the coarsest idioms of everyday speech. His images were shabby or grotesque. His first book, *In New York*, published in 1919, which established his reputation as one of the most interesting voices in the post-classical phase of Yiddish literature, took for its setting and subject the new world—the metropolis ironically reinterpreted as a modern garden of Eden.

The grass in this paradise can be seen only under a magnifying glass; its trees have scarcely seven leaves; the watchman throws you out before you have even done any wrong, and no birds sing.

Is this to be our garden now
Just as is, in morning's glow?
What then? Not our garden?

The book opens with this guarded celebration of morning and concludes with a phantasmagoric epic, "A Night," in which the horrors of World War I storm the poet's consciousness until they elicit from him a broken series of dirges.

The range of contents of *In New York*, from romantic lyrics and dramatic narratives to parodies and apocalyptic visions, confirmed not only Halpern's artistic maturity but the sudden authority of the new American Yiddish literature. Beginning in 1919, and largely because of Halpern's work, the tide of influence in Yiddish poetry flowed mostly outward, from America to Europe, reversing its earlier direction.

In the same year Halpern married a young woman whom he had courted for several years, and for whom he continued to feel a lifelong, if not exclusive, affection. During the war, he had somewhat isolated himself by his firm stand against conscription, attacking even those Jews who joined the Jewish Brigade of the British army. But in 1922, in the golden afterglow of the Russian Revolution, when the Communist daily newspaper, the *Freiheit*, began publication in New York, Halpern entered upon a brief, heady period of popularity. From the first issue of April 2, he was a regular contributor, with a ready forum for his poems, incidental essays, occasional theater reviews, and literary criticism.

The association with the *Freiheit* did not solve Halpern's financial worries because the newspaper paid little and irregularly. As its featured poet, however, Moishe Leib enjoyed a wide audience and an acknowledged importance. He was sent on *Freiheit*-sponsored lecture tours to Detroit, Boston, Toronto, Winnipeg, Cleveland, and Chicago, speaking on the question of a proletarian literature and trying to drum up subscribers. With the help of admirers in Cleveland he put out his second book, *Di Goldene Pave* ("The Golden Peacock"), in 1924. These poems, far more aggressive in tone and explicit in their social criticism than the earlier works, were praised or condemned, depending almost entirely on the political orientation of the reviewer. In Warsaw, a literary column sponsored by the influential weekly, *Literarishe Bleter*, asked leading Yiddish writers to name and discuss their favorite author. Moishe Leib Halpern figured prominently among the contributors' nominees—indeed, it was rumored that the frequent appearance of his name in this column was the newspaper's main reason for suspending the series, since its editors did not share the enthusiastic opinion of their contributors.

By the mid-20's relations between Halpern and the editors of his own newspaper, which had grown increasingly strained, reached the point of mutual repudiation. As Soviet authority exerted ever greater control over local American activities, the *Freiheit* was expected to toe the party line, and its contributors were put under similar pressure to conform. Halpern's poetry was becoming so complex that the "proletarian" readership for whom it was ostensibly intended complained of its incomprehensibility. On his speaking tours, Halpern said exactly what was on his mind. With some regret and some relief, he was dropped. This left Halpern without any steady income, and, in a period of polarization among the various Yiddish newspapers and cultural organizations, without a base of support. With his wife and three-year-old son, he moved to Los Angeles in 1927, but was back in New York before the year was out. He was caught in political limbo between the Left whose militancy he was among the first to recognize and repudiate, and the anti-Communists, whom he could not join because to do so would smack of careerism and "selling out."

In 1929, when the *Freiheit*'s condoning of the Arab massacre of Jews in Hebron shocked many of its supporters into rebellion, a new nonaligned weekly, the *Vokh*, was briefly launched. Despite the inclusion on its editorial board of such well-known writers as H. Leivick and Lamed Shapiro,

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and despite a host of prestigious regular contributors, of whom Halpern was one, the paper was never able to achieve financial stability and folded after a year. Halpern, plagued by poverty and ill health, both of which he camouflaged as long as he could, died suddenly after an undiagnosed stomach ailment on September 2, 1932. His death, in the throes of the Depression, and against the background of European political dangers, touched off a moment of anguish that had Moishe Leib at its center but encompassed much more. Once he was dead, beyond the squabbles of Jewish cultural life, it was easy to recognize his marvelous talent. At the same time, his death, as if momentarily exposing the dreary backstage of art, revealed the pitiful isolation of American Yiddish writers, the ugly effects of Communist dogmatism on Jewish intellectual life, and the weakness of Jewish culture in America once it was no longer receiving fresh infusions of European immigrants. The shock of Halpern's death momentarily illumined both the unexpected achievement and its impermanence, like a comet's bright flash.

By the time of his death, Halpern's image as a poet had achieved an almost autonomous life, much as Sholem Rabinovitch's fictional self-representation as Sholem Aleichem had done in the preceding generation. He was the smart-aleck immigrant, Moishe Leib, restless as a wolf and stagnant as a bear in his new surroundings, pursued by memory, spurred by a rage of conscience, and claimed by a talent that stuck to him as doggedly as cow manure to a bare foot. Though his language was startling and occasionally crude, Moishe Leib himself was discomfitingly familiar: he was the unassimilable element in the process of self-adaptation, the coarse particularism that could not be smoothed over, the mocking disclosure that the masquerade of refinement was uglier than what had gone before, and doomed to fail besides.

For most of the *Yunge*, poetry was a means of transforming their harsh and often degrading circumstances into something of intrinsic worth. Yiddish, a language heretofore associated with the rough prosaic task of daily survival, would be their instrument of purification, the inner flame of the poet's aesthetic heat burning away the dross of experience to create perfect expression, a still life of distilled beauty. With the naive folk song as one model of purity, and the rarefied idealism of Russian mystics like Fyodor Sologub as another, the poets tried to bring their private perceptions and visions to sublimated expression.

Always in opposition, Moishe Leib reinvented himself instead as a street musician, drowning out the humiliations of immigrant life with his own raucous, aggressive ditties:

Children laugh in sport and fun
But I don't want to be undone
Shake a leg, kids! Hop on by
One more punch then, in the eye.
One more spit!
In spite of it
With one jump everything is quit.
Inured to all with an evil name
From my pocket I pinch some bread
And swig from my flask, down from my head
The sweat pours and my blood's aflame.
So as if to break
The drum, I bang
And then I make
The cymbals clang
And round and round about I spin—
Boom! Boom! Din-din-din!
Boom! Boom! Din!

—(Translated by John Hollander)

The disharmonious drummer, recklessly uncouth, tears away at every false façade, especially at the romantic idealizations of his contemporaries.

Chief among Halpern's targets was the ubiquitous nostalgia for the old country, the gilded memories of home. Actually, before World War I, Halpern's first major published work had been a ten-part poem tracing the voyage of a young man *In der fremd* ("Away From Home") and using sanctified images of Polish Jewry to cushion the encounter with the great stone city. But even as this poem was being celebrated as a masterpiece of the new exilic literature, Halpern turned against his erstwhile source of solace. The ruinous scope of World War I, with its destruction of so many home communities, opened in Halpern a new range of anger. While others began to invoke forgotten grandmothers in idyllic landscapes, and as popular Yiddish culture settled into sentimental longing for "*Mayn shtetele Belz*," Halpern recreated *his* shtetl, Zlochow, as a den of hypocrisy, where the local pious man would sell the sun with its shine like a pig in a poke, and parents would expose their own daughter to public humiliation because of an indiscretion (whose issue is the angry speaker of the poem). It was as if Halpern were deliberately resharpening the original satiric edge of the 19th-century Yiddish literature, and recalling the restrictive harshness of traditional Jewish society against which the immigrant generation had rebelled.

Paradoxically, though these poems were attacked for their callousness, Halpern's rough images were a better instrument of commemoration than the pastel reminiscences they mocked. The freshness of his antipathy made the *shtetl* come artistically alive, endowed its petty villainies with the ring of actuality. It was the elegy that Halpern hated, the hushed respect that comes into being only after its subject has died. In a not unusual poem by Halpern, a man watching a prostitute undress for him is sourly reminded of the way his grandfather used to pull his shirt over his head in the bathhouse, even though he had been given buttoned shirts that could be taken off less dramatically. The introduction here and there of

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these original, irreverent analogies were small, deliberate acts of sword-crossing within a general literary atmosphere of pious enshrinement.

The provocative nature of Halpern's verse sometimes obscured its emotional and thematic profundity:

Evening sun.
And, in evening cold, all the flies
In the corners of the panes are numb,
If not already dead.
On the rim of a water glass, the last
Is alone in the whole house.
I speak:
"Dear fly,
Sing something of your far-off land."
I hear her weep—She answers:
May her right leg wither
If she plucks a harp
By strange waters
Or forgets the dear dung heap
That had once been her homeland.

—(Translated by Nathan Halper)

Despite the reduction of everything—of the globe and the journey across it, of the poet and his poetic tradition, of the Jewish exile and the eternity of Jewish longing—an unexpected compassion stirs. Diminished, corrupted, and almost extinct, a parody of former grandeur, the Jew and the poet still sing of their yearning. The swollen rhetoric must be deflated by Halpern's impious effrontery before feeling can once again emerge.

If the prettification of a national past provoked him to mockery, the denial of contemporary social reality stirred Halpern to even greater rage. He had no consistent, discernible social philosophy, but from the flow of his sympathies and antipathies a line of argument emerges. The acknowledged tyrant over earth's creatures is the stomach. People, no less than mice, go to great lengths to protect their rations. It is therefore necessary, in any judicious assessment of the human condition, to recognize the daily marketplace scramble for "onions and cucumbers and prunes." The crudity of this struggle is admittedly disheartening to aesthetes and other idealists. But as long as it remains the basis of life, the primacy of matter over spirit cannot be gainsaid. This is as close as Halpern comes to an outright endorsement of Marxism.

Halpern's fierce independence precluded any fixed loyalty to system or party. There were times when he blistered like Mayakovsky, hurling insults at the goddamned intellectuals with their white hands and at the cowardly enemies of the great experiment of dictated social equality. His poem on the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, the anarchists whose trial for murder was used by the Communists as a rallying point against the American system, is exceptionally poignant, an expression of genuine outrage. There were also poems like "A Striker Song," echoing the old sweatshop complaints of oppressed workers against their blood-sucking bosses, which were set to music to be sung at union rallies.

But essentially, Halpern looked up the skirts of every orthodoxy. The Russian Revolution was an accident. "Had Lenin been the father of a child, or better yet of five children, as he was himself one of five, the Czar would still be ruling Russia." This certainty, based on Halpern's exceptionally powerful instincts of paternal love and responsibility, gives the lie to historical determinism. Though Halpern enjoyed his reputation as a "proletarian poet," and took pride that the landlord's painter, sent in to touch up his apartment, knew of his work, he had no confidence in the proletariat as such, scorning anyone who could make a virtue or accept the harness of steady labor. All absolute claims are comical, whether human or divine. In "The Tale of the World," a great king ordains the conquest of all the world, only to discover that it is far too large to fit into the royal palace:

The courtiers, meanwhile, hold that the world
Should be kept out there under guard.
But the king has turned a deathly gray,
Fearing the world will get wet some day
When the rain falls hard.
But the plow in the field,
And the cobbler's leather sole,
And the mouse in his hole,
Laugh till they cry,
Laugh till they nearly die.
The world's still there, outside.

—(Translated by John Hollander)

Reality defies metaphysical or political systematization, and the spirit most authentically attuned to life must be duly profane.

Halpern's resistance to the accepted sentiments and postures of his time comes to sharpest expression on the national question, not so much because of Halpern's identification as a Jew, which was forever touched by irony, but because of his passionate distrust of the "*goyim*." His unkind views of Christians were disturbing to every segment of the Jewish readership: to those with faith in American tolerance who did not want to be reminded of religious divisiveness, and to those preaching the international brotherhood of workers. But for Halpern, the pretense of brotherliness where none existed was a particularly corrupting form of self-deception. It required, first, a falsification of the past; then, a willful stupidity in the present. What is more, it was inevitably accompanied by self-hatred, of which the modern Jew already had more than his fair share.

In his own case, the poet traced his encounter with hostile Christianity back to childhood incidents, such as the special treatment he was accorded by his Polish classmates:

A golden cross was thrust at me to kiss

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A second classmate smeared a cross over my back.
And when my youthful heart could tolerate no more,
The teacher noted it, and turned me out the door.

Halpern acknowledges that after this and similar incidents he went out into the world and learned that Jesus brought his blood as a sacrifice to atone for the sins of mankind. But even so, he could not learn to love those pious folk whose faith in Jesus' blood expresses itself in the pursuit of his.

Eventually Halpern's intuitive rebellion evolved into a philosophical distaste for Christianity's justification of suffering and death. Christianity is seen to be doubly deceitful: theoretically, because it falsifies the absolute distinctions between life and death; practically, in its violent exercise of the religion of love. Some of Halpern's poems poke gentle fun at Christian spirituality, as when Jesus speaks to the children, explaining that all in the world *is his*—with the single exception of them. Elsewhere, in poems like "The Jewish Blacksmith," the Christian is the wanton and stupid murderer of the Jew, refusing his civil companionship and repudiating his assistance:

He's got himself an alehouse where he whoops it up and drinks
He's got himself a churchhouse where he supplicates and stinks
And that's all he needs—that lout, my neighbor.

Appalled by such blunt characterization of European peasantry, the Communists accused Moishe Leib of fomenting pogroms, a charge that seemed only to fuel his attack. His style grew more crabbed, but his aim remained sure:

> In the Soviet Union . . . no sooner does the rooster crow than someone must begin worshiping the red divinity, blessed be he, because otherwise no one is allowed to hang around with his hands in the mud—like the Israelites in Egypt. There is only this difference: there, they kneaded children into the walls, whereas in Sovietland you have only to reshape yourself. You become a new Adam—without even a figleaf. For the robust *goyim* this is surely a piece of good luck, but for our kind . . . well, I've heard that they skulk around with their hands over their genitals, more atremble now before the puniest little Gentile than they ever were before.

This was Halpern with his gloves off, striking out in both directions at once. Seeing matters plain, "without even a figleaf," he recognized under the revolutionary camouflage the persistent hold of despotism and anti-Semitism, and the modern forms of Jewish enslavement and self-enslavement.

Outside the tiny island of his wife and son, Halpern did not make his peace with very much, least of all with himself. Unfortunately, his reputation as an upstart and rebel itself became something of a cliché, so that even his most attentive readers did not note the deepening strain of pessimism that went along with the increasing difficulty of his later work. The similes and metaphors which had always been an important feature of Halpern's style began to take on a life of their own, growing homerically, and overshadowing narrative or thematic development. At the same time the poems came to be set out along a line of rational argument, with prepositions and conjunctions—although, because, despite, notwithstanding, but, if only, yet—like so many signposts, pretending to guide the poem to its firm, logical, inevitable conclusion. The tension between the reasoned form of the discourse and the wild density of its images, between the homey, old-world stock of references, and the bleak, modern situation to which they were applied, heightened the anxiety of this poetry, as if it were straining to achieve clarity against an overwhelming emotional tide.

Indeed, there seems little doubt that Halpern *was* struggling for clarity. To those who told him they could not understand his latest work, he answered with incredulity but tried with rough patience to explain. Many of these poems take the form of exhortations, public lectures, notes of advice to his son, where within the thickets of private allusions he warns against war, mourns poverty, and decries its corresponding evil, petty greed.

But the futility of this effort was also his theme. Halpern had been drawn to Yiddish in a milieu of cultural vitality, when writers were prized, perhaps not with sufficient critical detachment, but personally, for what they represented to particular segments of emerging modern Jewry, and to the emerging image of a modern Jewry with a literature of its own. It was within this nurturing atmosphere of literary relevance that Moishe Leib matured, only to find that he had overshot the mark. His dazzling complexity was lost on his fellow American Jews, who grew plainly pragmatic under the pressure of local and world events.

Who was responsible for this failed opportunity? Halpern saw that the widening gap between the artist and his natural constituency could be attributed to the artist. He made merciless fun of the poets who want "the words they sing to be as delicate as the church carvings of the Middle Ages, and as pure as the yearning of a flutist in the evening." When he turns to the housepainter sitting beside him in the subway and asks whether this is what he too wants, the man moves nervously away. Halpern speculates that had he asked the painter whether he wanted a hot bath after work, the man would have known how to respond.

Nevertheless, Halpern understood from his own failed experiment as a public poet that however he might frame his questions, he was beyond the reach of the housepainter. Yiddish had developed

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a high culture at the moment when its speakers were riveted, as never before, to the struggle for survival. In America, the comic impotence of Yiddish before the hegemony of English cast the language into the role of "the little Jew" within Judaism itself. To put one's faith in Yiddish was to play the fool, to withstand the reality of acculturation. As one of the chief chroniclers of the immigrant marketplace, Halpern knew the revealed helplessness of his language, and with it of his writing. He quotes a fictitious uncle who says that "if he were a diplomat, he would demand that all declarations of war henceforth be issued in Yiddish only. This would fairly guarantee lasting peace in the world." In the foreground of this self-mocking statement is the powerless Yiddish utterance. In the background, less humorously, are the actual nation-states, with all too much power for their evil ends.

Despite his grim appraisal of the fate of the poet in modern times, of Yiddish among the Jews, and of Jews among the Gentiles, Halpern stayed almost free of self-pity. The energy of his anger and hatred gave wings to his imagination, made him endlessly inventive. Halpern sharpened the teeth of American Yiddish literature. Having cut himself loose from Jewish pieties, he did not seek shelter among any of the alternate orthodoxies, whether aesthetic or political. In a sense his work reflects the energy of the immigrant generation that went out "on its own" with all the impudence and improvisation of those with nothing to lose.

Unlike English writers like Abraham Cahan, whose work undertakes to interpret the Jewish immigrant to the non-Jews, Halpern was unshackled by any external constraint. In him one can find the boldness and self-reliance that was so much in evidence among immigrant Jewish businessmen, but so little manifest in their cultural spokesmen. There are those who found him too aggressive, arguing that his joy in combat ruined the finer judgment required of art. What makes Halpern unusual, even among the aggressive Jewish writers, is that his opposition to others remained appreciably greater than his antagonism toward his own.

Note

For the English reader, the best examples of Moishe Leib Halpern's poetry can be found in *A Treasury of Yiddish Poetry*, edited by Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969; Schocken [paper], 1976). *The Golden Peacock*, edited by Joseph Leftwich (Robert Anscombe & Co., 1939), contains some translations of Halpern by the Canadian poet A.M. Klein. Ruth Whitman's *Anthology of Modern Yiddish Poetry* (October House, 1966) includes three poems by Halpern with the Yiddish text and facing translation. Individual poems by Halpern have appeared in Commentary (November 1947, October 1949, and June 1950, translated by Jacob Sloan), and in the *Kenyon Review* (Winter 1979, translated by Kathryn Hellerstein).

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Living in Jidda

Dale Walker

MANY of us here live in compounds. This is not done, as in other colonial arrangements, to protect ourselves from the natives, but rather the opposite: to protect the Saudis from us. For while the average Saudi will let you know that his culture is "superior" to yours, he is unable to account for the fact that ours has such a corrupting, seductive appeal to him.

I live in a place called Shorbatly Village, which is a fenced rectangular compound of seven hundred flat-roofed houses ten miles out on the desert from downtown Jidda. This compound, this "village" now housing seven hundred families of foreign workers (mostly Americans and British and some Pakistanis) was trucked out piecemeal to this site, as ships freighted it in, and erected barely three years ago. Although the houses are "prefabricated," they are permanent and do not give an impression of flimsiness. The foundation is a concrete slab covering 1,320 square feet of ground to which, like a pre-measured, pre-cut do-it-yourself kit, the walls, ceilings, doors, windows, moldings, and all the rest have been bolted and screwed. Around each house there is a head-high concrete wall enclosing a sandpile yard. This village (Shorbatly is the name of a Jidda merchant) has its own power station at the southeast corner which burns oil day and night through four chimneys with the sound of a giant blowtorch. It has to keep 3,500 air-conditioners as well as lights and other appliances alive. In addition, Shorbatly has its own water tower, mosque, supermarket, gas station, swimming pool, and tennis court.

Once behind your wall, inside your house, you can surround yourself with familiar objects brought from home and forget where you are, but go out into the "streets" and your sense of visual aesthetics begins to register distress. Prefabrication aims at speed and economy and sacrifices diversity. There are no peculiarities of architectural detail to interest the eye. Nothing purely whimsical or eccentric. Were it not for the numbers stencilled on the walls in black paint, you wouldn't know which was yours. There is nothing in sight higher than these sun-baked houses, which have been plunked down on the raw desert. The monotony deadens. No high trees. No shade anywhere. The only green is in the yards that you see behind a left-open gate, and they are planted in grass, flowers, acacia trees, and oleander shrubs. Some of these, with two or more years growth on them, are already higher than the wall; but, for instant leafage, practically every wall has dense ivy-like vines that have climbed up the inside and taken off down the outside, their outermost creepers reaching across the gravel area next to the walls where cars are parked and even out into the asphalt streets, where the vines' innocent take-over-the-world energy is finally discouraged by the crushing reality of automobile tires. These vines, as grateful for water as the stray cats hereabouts are for food, grow so quickly in sand that in a few months, if there were no cars, their exploring tendrils would grope over rooftops and twine across roadways and Shorbatly Village, seen from the air, would look like a square of unbroken Amazon rain forest set down on the garbage dumps of Saudi Arabia.

Take a map of old Jidda—the Jidda known to the ancients and pretty much unchanged right down to the time of T. E. Lawrence—and superimpose it on the new, and you'll see that it was barely a twentieth of what it is now. Maps are useless. The city outgrows each new map before it is printed. Only a few of the bigger, older streets bother to have names and even these, like the fickle channels in a volatile river, are constantly changing. Today I drove to work along an avenue which two years ago was the corniche along the waterfront. Now the water has been pushed a mile back, the land filled, and houses built where then all was sea. You'd think that unlimited expansion in three directions would be enough to satisfy the wildest growth; but Jidda, the insatiable, advances westward too.

As a result of this carcinomatosis, Jidda is a physical wreck. Modern Saudi Arabia is the ugliest, unkemptest place on earth: the trash that is simply everywhere; the heaps of construction rubble; the out-and-out dumps; the millions of cement sacks and random papers and cartons and plastic bags blowing on the sticky wind and plastered against fences and snagged on every scrap of wire and metal and smashed abandoned car (of which there are hundreds)—all this is tackiness on

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such a monumental scale that one is as much awed as offended. Surely, one thinks, to achieve a litterscape of such breathtaking dimension requires more than mere slovenliness; some plan must be behind it all. This logical deduction I am unable to prove, but I do know that on yesterday's dump are this morning's villas. One can only hope that eventually houses and roads will cover all the rest of it and a system of garbage removal will have been devised; otherwise the tells of Jidda will keep reaching upward toward Mecca and meet hers halfway down in an unbroken litteropolis.

Jidda, now grown mighty in its own right, was originally important only as the port of Mecca and as the burial place of Eve. A strong legend persists that *this* was the Garden of Eden, and Eve's grave—how far back can you get?—has always been a sort of local curiosity, pointed out by the natives quite matter-of-factly. That is, it was until 1928, which is the year the Wahhabis, Muslim fanatics for whom any veneration of the dead savored of idolatry, covered it over. But they left the wall around it standing, as if some deep and final superstition prevented them from being responsible for obliterating the site altogether. Perhaps they should have. It is still known as "Eve's tomb," but now "destroyed by. . . ." When you get close to that wall, by the way, there is the strong smell of a country outhouse and a swarm of flies. Any wall is as good as another in this country of emigrant workers and no public bathrooms.

Mecca is forty miles inland from Jidda. Since I am not a Muslim, I am not allowed to get even a glimpse of Mecca, much less pay it a visit. There is a special highway for non-Muslims which makes a wide respectful detour around Mecca (for those driving eastward to Taif, or Riyadh, or the Arabian Gulf), and no planes are allowed to fly over it lest it be profaned by the eyes of the infidel on board. Mecca is the home of the Great Mosque, which is the holiest mosque of Islam. Inside the mosque is the cube-shaped structure known as the Kaaba, said to have been built by Abraham. In one corner of the Kaaba, like a dark precious stone girdled by a wide band of silver, is mounted (remounted by the hand of Mohammed himself) the sacred meteorite which Muslims hold in such reverence that countless of them, over the centuries, have perished in an attempt to make pilgrimage to it. In Mohammed's day (and before: Mecca and the Kaaba, once a repository for the graven images of paganism, predate Islam as a pilgrimage site), they came to it by ship and on foot and "on every lean camel," and of course many of them never returned to their starting places. It was always a brutal, dangerous trip for the pilgrims from Cordoba, Fez, Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, Isfahan, and other soft centers of Islamic civilization; at least the Arabian tail-end of it was. They had to travel through a desert ever attended by thirst and disease and tribes of ragged Bedouins who thought that Allah had sent these plump caravaneers expressly for their plunder, as he from time to time sent on the west wind the hordes of fat locusts to be roasted and eaten (and still does, though his former largesse has been reduced by the efforts of the British and American locust-control stations in the Sudan). The Bedouin has always had a notorious reputation as a pillager. An anonymous sailor, writing in the 1st century C.E., remarks, after first describing the tribes of Fish Eaters along the coast, that the "country inland is peopled by rascally men speaking two languages" (did he mean that they spoke with forked tongue, i.e., that they were habitual liars?) "who live in villages and nomadic camps, by whom those sailing off the middle course are plundered, and those surviving shipwrecks are taken for slaves. . . . Therefore we hold our course . . . and pass on as fast as possible by the country of Arabia until we come to the . . . regions of peaceful people, nomadic, pasturers of cattle, sheep, and camels" (Yemen).

SEVERAL hundred yards off the eastern fence of Shorbatly Village there is, under construction but nearly finished, a prison. The only thing that distinguishes it from other prisons (it has the high walls, the in-curving strands of barbed wire at the top, the guard towers) is the slim minaret rising above the wall. From the forbidding look of the whole place I assume it was built for maximum security; how could anyone hope to get over a wall twenty feet high? The mystery to me is, why such a prison at all? The crime rate is very low; and, besides, Saudis do not go in for long detentions. Basically, a jail is regarded as only a kind of temporary holding pen until the punishment, whatever it is, is carried out. For minor crimes, e.g., drunkenness (beginning drunks always get off with a couple of warnings), the offender may be assigned forty-five public lashes to be administered over a three week period. The poor wretch will be detained three weeks, publicly humiliated on three successive Fridays when he will be led out before witnesses, his back bared, his name read, his offense proclaimed, and given fifteen lashes with a flexible bamboo cane. No blood is drawn. The whipping is more token than earnest.

Nearly everyone by now has heard what happens to thieves, but nearly everyone I have talked to has got only half the story. A thief caught redhanded is not hustled away to the police station where his hand is cut off. He is given three warnings. If he steals because he is poor or because he is sick and cannot work, this is a mitigating circumstance and he is helped, not punished. But if there is nothing wrong with him, and he keeps stealing, not driven to it by desperation, then he is deemed incorrigible and in need of a lesson that he will remember. His right hand is amputated. If

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he persists after that, his left hand, and on down to his feet if he's stubborn and can spare them.

Another minor offense that can keep a man in jail for a while is over the question of something called blood money. If you are involved in an automobile accident in which somebody is killed or maimed, you are obligated to pay blood money to the victim's family. The amounts vary, but you can count on ten to fifteen thousand dollars. Foreigners take out liability insurance which theoretically covers them, but most Saudis don't bother. Insurance, as a hedge against the unknowable future, is an alien concept. So, for that matter, is weather forecasting. They report the weather that was, not the weather that will be (although nothing here is easier to predict), for who can know about that but Allah? Anyway, a man will be kept in jail after a fatal accident for as long as it takes him or his tribe to get the money together. When it is paid, he is freed. Incidentally, as a curious illustration of the Saudi's fatalistic logic, if you are the passenger in a taxi which is involved in someone's death, you, not the driver, are liable for the blood money. It is your fault. Why? Well, look at it this way: if the driver had not been taking you to a certain place, he would not have been in that spot at that moment the accident occurred, would he?

For serious crimes—murder, rape, adultery—one is detained in jail only for as long as it takes for the death sentence to be passed and carried out. That usually does not take long. Our penal quagmire is not theirs. Murderers are beheaded. Rapists and adulterers are stoned. These executions always take place on Friday (the Muslim sabbath) in a public square after the midday prayer at the mosque. Nobody is discouraged from attending, although women are rarely seen and foreigners who attempt to take pictures will have their film confiscated. The beheadings, for as long as I can remember, have been performed by a big Sudanese who, as a reward for years of faithful service in the most disagreeable profession imaginable, lives in style in a grand villa here in Jidda. I have never seen an execution. I have never wanted to. I have had them described to me by eyewitnesses, and that's as close as I ever want to get. No man dies easily, that's the point, and when a man's head comes off, there is a great deal of blood.

IN THE summer of 1977 in Hofuf, an oasis town in the Eastern province near Riyadh, three men were stoned, and one beheaded, for raping a woman. I just missed seeing it by an hour. Had I been there in time, I think I would have taken a peek at it. I went to Hofuf from Al Khobar, where I was then living, to poke around the rug *souk*. It was then, at about one in the afternoon, when the streets were empty, the shops closed, and everyone eating lunch or napping, that I came upon the three bodies. I knew instantly what I was seeing, but I think I might have needed some time to figure it out if I had not been already imaginatively prepared for it through my years here. It is, after all, one of the shocking sights of a lifetime. Most of us by now have witnessed executions. Who, in the global world of TV, isn't familiar by now with the gas chamber or firing squad? But television is still a film, not life, and for 3-D cinemascopic verisimilitude there is nothing like finding yourself in a typical Saudi Arabian square (with shards of squashed Nido milk and Velveeta cheese cans and soft-drink flip-tops and thrown-out hooves and ears of butchered goats half-buried in the churned and filthy sand), in the breathless glare of a desert afternoon, seeing three bodies buried to their waists in pits, slumped like rag dolls in the abandon of death. Their hands (with fingers swollen like sausages) were bound with rope behind their backs. Their crime was rape. Their mistake, I mean their strategic mistake as criminals, was that it wasn't rape *and* murder. They had not killed their victim, believing that she'd keep her mouth shut rather than live in the obloquy sure to follow if she talked. For society, which will duly execute the rapist, will nevertheless always be impatient with the victim, believing that somehow—in something she did or didn't do—the woman was not careful enough. Especially would that be true in this case, since (as I was to read the next day in the English-language newspaper) she knew the men, or at least one of them. He was in fact a neighbor, and it was for this reason, she said, that she had accepted a ride home from the *souk* with him. Why didn't they kill her? Perhaps because, more than appalled by what they'd already done, they were paralyzed by fear and so incapable of thinking through the consequences of their act. Or who knows? Perhaps they debated killing her but couldn't bring themselves to do it. Rape is one thing but murder is something else. Whatever stayed them, letting her live meant death for themselves. She told. When the soldiers came to the house of the man who owned the car used in the abduction, they needed no further confession than his incoherence and incontinence.

The position of the three bodies formed a rough equilateral triangle, each one about twenty yards from the other. The fourth man involved was a bachelor. Since he presumably had more incentive than the others, he was let off lightly with a decapitation. It was the three married ones that I was looking at. During the actual chucking of the stones they had worn canvas hoods. These had now been removed. The swollen faces looked calm, but it would have been difficult to recognize the features even if you had known them personally, for each face was covered with a fine white dust such as a clown, or someone in the role of a ghost in a play, might use as makeup. It was as if someone, perhaps one of the relatives of the victim, had thrown a double handful of sand on

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each one of them when the hoods were removed. There were flies around the blood that had dried in their hair. No, they were certainly not spared the indignity of exposure. The whole point was exposure. You are supposed to go by and say to your son, "Well, there's Ali. And there's Saeed. And there's Mohammed over there. Come to this. With wives and children, too." How many women have been widowed in this way, I wonder? In America they would form a club, WSR (Wives of Stoned Rapists), and have monthly meetings and encounter sessions. Here, each widow (who was not allowed to choose her own husband, after all) will go back to her father (who did), back to her tribe whose name she never gives up. Or, if her father is dead or old, she will go to one of her brothers, and her children will be absorbed into an ongoing family and be raised as one of them. To a Saudi, his family, his tribe, is everything. The tribe gives him his identity, his place in the world, his strength, his security, his welfare. The web of kinship is very strong and wide. Now the government is taking the place of the tribe, with mixed success. Tribe was here before the government and it will surely be here after.

A barefoot black boy in a dirty *thobe* (ankle-length shirt) walked by. He was more interested in looking at me looking at the bodies than in the bodies themselves. Perhaps he had seen it all from the beginning: the men brought by soldiers through the excited, death-smelling mob to the freshly dug pits. Names read out. Offense proclaimed. Punishment decreed. Last words of the condemned. The hoods placed. The crowd suddenly silent. The three piles of demitasse-sized stones trucked in earlier for the occasion. The first stone thrown by the executioner (not the Sudanese, the sword is his specialty), whose job it is to act as a sort of master of ceremonies, encouraging the faint-hearted, and to throw enough well-aimed stones to insure, one hopes, at least a quick unconsciousness if not a swift death. The doctor kneeling from time to time in front of each man with a stethoscope, either to signal the end or to stand back and let the stoning recommence.

As the boy and I stood there, each of us looking at what we found interesting, a Hofuf municipality truck puffing out blue-gray clouds of insecticide in synchronization with its one-cylinder pump—poop poop poop poop poop—and followed closely by a half-dozen skylarking boys, came spraying from the direction of the vegetable *souk*, entered the square, sprayed the living and the dead—poop poop poop poop poop—and went on toward the meat *souk* where carcasses hang on hooks and where blood and offal tramped underfoot for generations on the greasy stone slabs draw millions of flies and have made vegetarians out of more than one foreigner. I held my breath as the truck passed by. The boy took off after it, laughing and shouting, and was soon enveloped in the dense, oily-smelling fog.

To get back to that prison—I wonder, every time my after-dinner digestive perambulations around Shorbatly's two-mile perimeter bring me parallel with its western wall, whether it could house—dare I breathe the word? —political prisoners. It could, for the truth is that nobody knows what happens to dissidents here. No one even knows if there are any dissidents. There are certainly no demonstrations of any kind, there are no unions, no strikes. The universities, which in other developing countries (although Saudi Arabia is in no way a typical "developing" country) may be hotbeds of youthful unrest, are here no better than glorified secondary schools. There is no such thing as liberal education, free discussion of ideas. It is a closed society. When considering where the Saudis are intellectually, it must be remembered that a citizen cannot even change his religion, and the punishment for apostasy is death. Any threat to rule by the Saud family would have to come from inside the government, from the ministries and the civil service, whose members comprise a sort of U.S.-educated club. Or else it could come from the officers' ranks of the armed forces, another Western-educated elite.

But if there have been fledgling conspiracies, or even an attempted putsch, the government, of course, has kept it quiet. There are only rumors. One rumor, which persists to this day, maintains that in 1969 a cell of air-force officers was caught in a plot. The officers confessed under torture and were taken up in a C-130 to 10,000 feet and pushed out over the Empty Quarter. But rumors are a dime a dozen in a place like this. The latest rumor has it that a routine spot check for smuggled whiskey at the Jordan border turned up a truckload not of whiskey but of arms and ammunition. That, they say, explains the current scarcity of scotch, for now every truck is stripped down and searched.

I first began hearing that rumor in August, but didn't think much about it until the seizure of the holy mosque in Mecca three months later. Whether those men were religious fanatics or political revolutionists will never be known by the general public. The government says that they were motivated purely by fanaticism, and views as perverse and unfriendly the dispatches of Western reporters trying to suggest that Saudi Arabia is vulnerable to the same sort of Islamic revolutionary turmoil that hit Iran.

Could it be true? Could some deluded schemers have been hoping for an Iranian-type uprising? Fools if they were. Iran had a large subclass of wretched peasants, a large population with many unassimilated ethnic elements, and an obviously unfair distribution of wealth. Saudi Arabia has a homogeneous population of only six million and most of them are making money hand over fist. There are a few latter-day Wahhabis who want to turn the clock back, but nobody else does. It

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should be understood that Saudi Arabia is having its revolution right now. The doors of opportunity are opening for everybody. Only a few years ago girls did not go to school. Now the wives of two of my colleagues, to have something to do, teach classes at the women's wing of Abdulaziz University. One teaches drama and poetry, the other teaches the English novel, and they report that their girls wade into Jane Austen and Thackeray, dissect the poems of Herrick and Marvell, as if to the culture born. This is revolution enough. The wealth of the royal family, while it is known to be great, is not generally envied. Everyone is so much better off than he was when the game started, so busy counting his own chips that he hasn't time to be worrying about the size of his neighbor's pile. Of course, the fact that revolution, Iranian-style, is not a serious possibility in this country may not deter the true wishful thinker, for whom facts don't matter. Remember, only a few years ago lots of our own youth actually thought that the American revolution was just a shove away. So it's possible. Anything is possible. And the prison is there.

But politics is not uppermost in the minds of most Westerners here. Politics is for the downtrodden or the well-off or the victim of injustice. We don't have the leisure for politics. We are down to basics, which means that most of our spare time is spent worrying where our next drink is coming from. It wouldn't be this way if we could just go out to the corner store and buy a six-pack of beer or a bottle of wine. But Saudi Arabia is dry. Not that Saudis don't drink. They do, everything they can get their hands on, and if they can't get their hands on any then they get their minds on it and daydream about drinking. The other evening I took a taxi from the *souk* to Shorbatly. After a miserably humid day a hot dry wind from the desert lowered the humidity drastically and turned the half hour of dusk suddenly into night with the fine sand it brought in with it. The driver turned on his headlights. I asked the man, a Jiddawi, what this kind of wind was called. *Hawa robar*—air hazy, he replied. It's good, he added. Yes, I agreed, good, even if it was a little hard to breathe. *Wallah*, the driver said, on an evening like this a man doesn't want to be driving a taxi.

I thought that with the exorbitant rate I was paying (there are no meters; you agree on a price before you get in) he should be happy enough doing what he was doing. How, then, I asked him, would he rather be spending his time? He flipped the end of his *ghutra* (headcloth) over the top of his *egal* (black rope) to expose his ear. On an evening like this, he explained, when there is no humidity, I would like to be outside, sitting on a rug under a tree, with a bottle of whiskey and some ice at my side. There was a silence. Damn it. As if the mere naming of it had created the need, my dry throat suddenly ached for the taste of cold whiskey. His must have too, for we both sighed at the same time. Finally I tested him coyly. Well, yes, I said, but whiskey is forbidden. He flipped the other side of his *ghutra* onto his head. Forbidden? Many things are forbidden. If forbidden to you means forbidden, then it is forbidden. It isn't *forbidden* to me, I explained, because I am not a Muslim. But it is against the law, and besides it isn't always available. It's available, he said. During Ramadan (Ramadan, the holy month of fasting, was just over) they crack down and it becomes more expensive. Yes, I agreed, it's very expensive. What is the price now? I asked. The price now is two hundred riyals (fifty-six dollars) a bottle. That's ridiculous, I said. What are you? he asked. American, I replied. What's the price in America? Thirty riyals, I said. Available everywhere? Everywhere, I assured him. We again fell into a whiskey-longing reverie. Our throats were parched. Ah, that dream of ice and scotch whiskey. I never felt such sympathy for a man. Doomed all his life to dream of a place where whiskey was affordable and available everywhere.

At my door I thought of inviting him in for a drink, but decided against it. It's always risky to offer alcohol to a Saudi unless he's your friend. It isn't that I was afraid this one would turn me in. I know a drinking man from an informer. I was afraid that he would show up at my door the next time the north wind blew and he had a thirst on. Poor devil. He drove off into the dry night and I found myself pouring, with trembling hand, a *sidiki* and tonic.

Sidik in Arabic means friend, and the *i* ending makes it possessive. Never has white-lightning been so fondly, so felicitously named. Its production has the simplicity of miracle. Bags of white sugar are dumped into water. Yeast is added. The yeast converts the sugar into a low-grade alcohol only as strong as wine. This is the "mash." The mash is then boiled in a pot still, the alcohol condensed and run through copper tubes into jugs. It is run through the still four times, until it is pure 180-proof alcohol. It is then cut with water to 90 proof and sold in the plastic bottles of the water used to cut it, usually a brand called Sohat, from Lebanon, or Safa, from Mecca (which I prefer for its delicious irony).

This happy product of American know-how was pioneered by the first Westerners actually to dig in and settle in this hard land (the "Arabia Felix" of the ancients was only a narrow mountainous strip of country beginning at Taif and running down to Yemen), who were the Aramco employees in Dhahran in the 1930's. They were tough men: geologists, engineers, and roughnecks; some of them sons of moonshiners, one would like to think. In those primitive, start-up days Aramco was generously involved in seeing to the physical comfort and emotional health of its valuable employees, and so it introduced as quickly as it

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could the amenities of civilized life: air-conditioning, a hospital, a movie, a radio station, paved roads, and *sidiki*. To make sure nobody blew himself up it even showed them how to make stills. When Crown Prince Fahd remarked, during the first oil crisis, that Saudi Arabia didn't want to hurt a country that had been "like a mother to us," he was speaking the literal truth. The U.S. did give birth to modern Saudi Arabia. Aramco was the midwife and *sidiki* was the mother's milk. For many Saudis it was their first experience with alcohol.

The production of *sidiki* requires special equipment but wine doesn't, and practically everyone makes it. To make wine all you need is a container (plastic jerry cans are the favorite) and grape juice. The grape juice, shiploads of it, is available in every market and foreigners take it home by the case. I think the minister of imports must wonder about this disproportionate popularity of grape juice over, say, apple juice. He probably knows the reason and would like to ban it as he has recently banned non-alcoholic beer, a malt beverage that has been around for years. The ministry, in explaining that decision, said that it was being consumed with the *thought* of real beer in mind and therefore violated the spirit if not the letter of Islam's prohibition of alcohol. With this kind of mentality at work you can be sure they would also like to ban grape and all fruit juices susceptible of being wrought by the magic of yeast into something new and strange; but, fortunately for us sinners, not everyone who buys juice subverts it to Satan's purpose, while not everyone who buys sugar turns it into *sidiki*. Of course all this brewing and fermenting takes time and eats into our weekends, but its reward (bottles full of beer and wine in the closet) is a feeling of smug plenitude such as the gardener enjoys at harvest time when the crops are in and the shelves are loaded with the canning. Now let the winter come.

AMONG the American community in Jidda there are to be found "old hands" who still affect a Yemeni or Sudanese houseboy (everyone could afford one ten years ago before this kind of domestic help was lost to the higher-paying construction industry) whom they trust with the whiskey, letting him serve drinks to the master and his guests. I was present at such a gathering a few evenings ago. The host, a businessman who entertains a lot, cannot be bothered with the cottage industry that I have just described. Through a fat Lebanese bootlegger with whom he places a monthly order of about a thousand dollars, he keeps a well-stocked bar. We were drinking sundowners on the terrace. I suppose, technically, I am an "old hand" here too: I have known the country for eleven years, or before the exponential modernization and expansion that began a decade ago and really got going in earnest five years later. We sip our drinks and talk about the "old" Saudi Arabia. There is a young prince in our company. This is nothing special. There is plenty of royalty to go around and everyone has "his" prince. There is also with us a member of the council of ministers, a Ph.D. from Berkeley who is telling us that he brought back with him from his latest visit to the States some cannabis seeds which he tried without success to grow in his garden.

I am a little shocked by this revelation. A few years ago nobody would admit to smoking marijuana; now a minister is trying to grow it. The sun, a huge unabashed globe of tropical orange, shimmers briefly in mirage on the horizon of the Red Sea, and sinks. At this latitude there is no prolonged twilight. From a minaret somewhere a loudspeaker blares forth the call for *Mahgrab*, the evening prayer. The houseboy, a small dark Yemeni, glides out on bare feet from the French doors with another tray of glasses in which the ice chinks comfortingly. I am drinking gin. The quinine and the ice and the lime say: good life. We sip. The prayer call reminds one of us that an old landmark, the whitewashed mosque with the leaning minaret, had been bulldozed out of the way for downtown road-straightening. A new one, of course, will be built nearby (in a country that takes its religion so seriously the number of mosques must increase, not decrease), but that isn't the point, as we reminded our two Saudi friends. Such familiar landmarks, reminders of a fast-disappearing Jidda, should be preserved. (Foreigners are more concerned about historical preservation than the natives.) We have, said the frustrated gardener, plenty of mosques. What we don't have—he swept his arm to invite us to look at the junk-heaped littoral—is enough *grass*.

A good life. A safe life. When we go home on visits people want only to hear more about the head-choppings and hand-cuttings. A lot of them —nine out of ten—inevitably say, "We could use some of that kind of thing here." Perhaps they're right. You can't buy whiskey in Saudi Arabia openly, no, but you can walk anywhere, day or night, in absolute safety. Those "rascally men, speaking two languages" would not touch your possessions today if you left them in the middle of the road for a week. They have been made, and they are kept, honest by fear.

THE Arabian peninsula is the eye of a hurricane. Just look at the map. Revolving about us are the winds of hunger, poverty, misery, disease. Start south and move clockwise: Yemen, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India. Each name tolls its bell of misery, whether it is drought, flood, pestilence, hunger, revolution, war, illiteracy, superstition, fanaticism, overpopulation. Workers come here from every one of these countries, and they are the lucky ones, the ones with jobs. Just across the way from

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the balcony where we sip drinks at dusk there is a huge villa in the making. I am told that it is for Gaith Pharaon, who is one of the world's fabulously rich men. It is hard to tell at this stage whether it is going to look like the Taj Mahal or the Alhambra.

The construction of these monster villas—palaces they should be called—can go on for a couple of years, utilizing the labor of dozens of coolies and big machines. The workers live at the site. They live "nowhere"; that is, they spread their rags or pieces of foam rubber and sleep wherever they can in and around the skeleton of the half-finished building. Since they defecate wherever they can, too, their peace, such as it can be on nights so sticky with humidity that you can nearly wring it out of a rag, is further troubled by the flies that they themselves have helped to attract. On a rickety table, banged together out of two-by-fours and plywood, there is a three-burner stove connected by a rubber hose to a gas bottle. On this they make their tea and do whatever cooking they can. They can't do much. Without refrigeration nothing lasts for more than an hour. To buy food they have to get to the *souk*, ten kilometers away.

After a long sweaty walk during which the dust stirred up by the cars cakes on their faces, they can crowd aboard a Toyota bus that takes them to *Bab Mecca*, the old Mecca Gate—now a neighborhood—at the edge of the old town. In the filthy streets between the close shuttered houses there (early travelers remarked on the "clean" streets, even T. E. Lawrence: "It was like a dead city, so clean underfoot"), there are even filthier open-air corner eateries where workmen's meals of chicken and yellow rice are spooned onto tin plates out of huge black pots and served with round loaves of unsalted, unleavened bread, places where flies abound, where skinny cats crunch bones underfoot and where the grains of rice spilled onto the greasy tables are brushed off by hand before the next patron sits down. After he eats, the immigrant worker makes a few purchases (soap, razor blades), gawks for a while at all the world's goods, and catches the jitney back to his site. At dawn he prays, has his tea and bread; and by sunup he is loading the cement-mixer with sand. He gets Fridays off. He sends most of the money he earns back to Yemen or Pakistan or wherever he comes from.

Now at the evening call to prayer some of the workers have washed and begun their prayers. They put out a mat and pray where they are, facing us because behind us is Mecca. They are Yemenis, and Pakistanis, and Egyptians, and Sudanese. I wonder whom, or what, their ancestors prayed to 3,000 years ago at dusk on the sites of half-completed pyramids. They drop to their knees, then to their hands, then they touch their foreheads to the ground. We know that Mecca is behind us, but it would have been an easy mistake for someone who didn't to conclude that it was to us, a priestly caste seated on a height above them, that they were making obeisance.

All was quiet. In front of us, beyond Pharaon's palace, the night-gathering sea lay unruffled by any breeze. Behind us, so faint that it was like a memory in a seashell, roared the hubbub of modern Jidda. When the houseboy came out again to see who wanted drinks, I had momentarily forgotten who I was or what century I was in. The world was shut out and I had slipped into a kind of daydream where I was one of those men down there. Then—it took something like an effort of will—I brought myself back. I sat forward. Of course I wanted another drink. With plenty of ice.

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Don Quixote & Other Jewish Memories

A Story

John Auerbach

WILL you forgive me some indulgence in memories? They are the real fabric of my life and sometimes I suspect I am more involved in them than all the people I know. Immune to any control they come and go, these memories; capricious harpies, they drag me into the past, then throw me back into the present, disregarding all the rules of time.

Don Quixote is again on the agenda, for some reason. He has always been on the agenda for as long as I can remember.

The book had only twenty or thirty pages, in big print, with crude, full-page color illustrations: I was a boy of five or six. Naturally, there was a windmill, and a very thin, funny-looking man with a lance; also a short fat one, behind him, riding on a mule. Every Saturday my grandfather came to visit and I, shifting my eyes from the book, and studying him from the side, noticed, with a mixure of horror and wonder, how alike were Reuven, my father's father, and the funny man in the book.

Grandfather wore high, peasant-style boots—the leather shone with oil and smelled very strong; he was tall, lanky, his stiff beard was white, spare, and he had a bulging giant's forehead. It was frightening, the resemblance, for had not my mother explained to me that the man in the picture was mad? Could it be that grandfather Reuven?—he owned and ran a tombstone factory and was a rational man—no, it could not be. Anyhow, I loved him immoderately. He balanced me neatly on his hard knees while we looked at the illustrated supplement to the daily paper, and said, now let's see who these guys are. It was sheer bliss to clutch his large hands with big strong veins and to touch the stiff wiry hair of his beard with my cheek. I used to explain to him who those guys in the paper were.

No, he could not be mad. He would not charge windmills on the plain, mounted on a gaunt horse. Not my grandfather Reuven.

CONVERSATIONS behind the window: conversations of people unseen. But that was in another life—or was it?

Crouching in the warmth of the bed under the blanket, I heard my parents talking; they spoke in low voices—probably for fear of waking me—but their voices rose and fell, and my heart rose and fell.

"He sold it all, I tell you," my father said, "and bought Ashkenazy's second-hand bookstore. In its entirety."

"Old books?"

"Yes."

"My God. What will they live on now?"

"He gave some money to mother. He said it's enough to live on. He said the ancient books are worth ten times as much as he paid for them."

"Worth? To whom? Great God!"

"He has those bundles of rubles. Thousands of rubles. He says the Bolsheviks will fall soon and we'll be able to live like princes on that Czarist money: it will be exchangeable."

In a whisper, my mother said: "He's mad. He's lost his wits."

After a long silence—my heart stood still—a still lower whisper: "I don't know. I'm not sure."

Then, only the rustling of sheets. No more talking. My head throbbed. Reuven, mad? Like the funny man who fought the windmills? And I loved him so much. I loved him so much it choked me with despair. I kept asking, "When is Saturday?" and my mother answered, "Soon, the day after tomorrow," or, "Tomorrow, tomorrow he'll come." One Saturday he failed to come, and the Saturday after that. "Grandfather is ill," they told me.

Then, one day, they took me to his house, and in the middle of the floor was a long box covered with black cloth, and a golden Shield of David embroidered on it, and grandmother, tiny, her face eroded by tears said, "Say goodbye to grandfather, child. Grandfather has died."

This was my first encounter with death, with the death of someone I loved more than myself. Many others were to come, but I knew nothing of it, had no premonitions, and was in pain only because something I thought belonged to me had been taken away. Nobody asked my permission.

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Some very old, very heavy books appeared in our house, and I was sitting on my high stool at the table and a book was spread out in front of me so huge that it covered the whole table.

"This is the Bible, with illustrations by Gustave Doré," my father said. I looked for a long time at the Egyptian army drowning in the sea. I put my tiny, colored *Don Quixote* on the open Bible, and looking at the knight sprawled in dust, with his broken lance, asked, "Did he die? Like grandfather?"

Father laughed, but I sensed insincerity in his laughter. "Of course not," he said, "he just got hurt, but he soon recovered, and had many, many other adventures."

I felt sorry for the wounded knight, for my dead grandfather, and for the drowning Egyptians, and decided that when I grew up, I, too, would have many adventures.

2.

WHEN you don't see the people talking, the conversation, overheard, has a different taste: like a cigarette smoked in the dark. Two men are talking just outside my window and I cannot help hearing them. I recognize the voices: one is the security officer, Shaul, the other, the new deck cadet, Avinoam. First trip.

They stand the security gangway watch—probably from ten to twelve, or ten till two, I'm not sure which. I myself am exempt from this duty. They walk slowly from the gangway a few meters aft, and back, talking. My windows are almost opposite the entrance to the ship's accommodation. I keep them open but draw the curtains. It is raining outside, but not cold.

In the beginning, Avinoam explains, there was the newspaper ad from the Ministry of Transport. A young man with a jacket slung over his back, staring at a freighter in port. A kitbag at his feet. Underneath, in capital letters, the caption: WHERE TO? And beneath that in regular print: Be a naval officer! Travel all over the world and get good pay. Then came further details and addresses of the recruitment offices.

"What struck me most," he says, "was how similar we were, this man in the ad and I, even when seen from behind. We could have been twin brothers. Our shirts had the same pattern. The jeans were the same. It could have been a snapshot of myself minus the kitbag and the ship in the background. I had hardly ever been in a port, but I often walk with my jacket slung over my shoulder like this in winter: when you go out thinking it's going to rain and then you feel too hot in the jacket, you take it off, and throw it, you know, over your shoulder and hold it by the collar with your left hand."

"And what did you do back home? I mean before you saw the ad," asks Shaul.

Listening to his voice outside, I remember his face: pale and serious, light olive skin and a young, short, coal-black beard. All these kids looked like biblical prophets when young, I thought. Once, on Independence Day, in the good old days, the military parade started with eight young sergeants, all with beards, marching briskly abreast with submachine guns slung over their chests. The crowd went mad for them, young, armed prophets.

But this one must have been a baby at that time. Will his beard, fifty years from now, be wiry and white? Has he anything—anything at all—of the other man's personality, opinions, inclinations? No, no, these things only ripen with age. Don Quixote embarked on his adventures in his late forties: you don't even know what it's all about till you're forty.

"Oh, I'm a banana man," says Avinoam, "Back in the kibbutz, as long as I can remember, I worked in the banana plantation. Always. As a schoolboy, before the army, after the army, and then in between reserve duty. Did you know a banana is indestructible? You cut it down, root it out, burn it, plough through the fields, do anything you want, the banana stays: all of a sudden a bright green impertinent sturdy leaf, all rolled up, starts growing—defiantly—and grows, and grows. Funny, isn't it?"

"Must be boring as hell."

"You get used to it," Avinoam answers. "You get used to everything. If it weren't for the war, maybe I'd be walking in the banana grove right now, in sweaty work clothes and with a machete in my hand."

"What war does to people," Shaul says. "Where were you?"

"Paratroopers, in the South. We crossed on the first night."

"Arik Sharon's men?"

"Yeah, and you?"

"We threw that bridge across. That's where I got wounded."

"The next night, after us. I got it. We must have been not far from each other."

"Sure."

A silence now behind my window, filled with the soft rustle of Italian rain. They must be lighting their cigarettes—I can hear a match being struck. Then, Shaul's voice, low and quiet: "A lot got killed from your kibbutz?"

"Four, one in Chinese Farm, two in Golan, and one pilot."

"Yeah."

"It rains all the time here: not like back home."

"Yeah, back there—it was raining fire."

"It sure was."

I know they're leaning against the wall of the deckhouse now, smoking cigarettes, looking at the rain, and they're both back there, on that October night in the Sinai. Two years ago.

Shaul interrupts the silence. "The ramp gave some protection," he says. "I mean the breach in the ramp: but on both sides of it, man, that was something: such concentrated fire! Artillery, rock-

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ets, katyushas, tanks, God knows what! And the machine guns, to finish off what was left. You crawled low under those pontoon bridges, and you knew that if you left that breach, you disintegrated: nothing could survive that firestorm.

"My knees were shaking," says Shaul. "I was too busy trying to control the shaking to think about anything else. And you know what? I couldn't control it. I put a lot of effort into it. I put everything I had, but I couldn't control the bloody knees. A guy next to me put his face in the sand and mumbled something, or ate sand, I don't know, I only saw his mouth moving constantly. Then I thought, God let me be killed instantly and stop seeing, stop hearing, stop trying to control, stop feeling, stop thinking. Get killed, but not crippled. Not wounded."

"Well, you got wounded after all," chuckled Avinoam.

"Yes, I got it. A sublieutenant crawled under the pontoon, and I saw his teeth chattering. I didn't know him from before: he wasn't from my unit. I saw him for the first and last time in my life. He screamed, what's-the-matter-with-our-boys? Wh-wh-what is the matter? People are waiting for that fu-fucking bridge—br-bridge, there, on the other side! Under fire! What the hell, are you waiting f-f-for? And he jumped out—right into the open, and stood there: it was a pure miracle, the fire didn't touch him."

"And then," said Avinoam, "you got that bridge across."

"And then," Shaul said, "we rolled that pontoon out, into the open, and into the canal, stumbling, cursing, falling, getting up again, we got it into the water, connected it with the other pontoons. Then I was hit and it was over for me. And you?"

Again Avinoam chuckles. "Well, I was on the other side. We crossed in rubber boats. I dug a hole for myself, and waited for your bridge. We didn't know how and when, but it stood to reason that there had to be a bridge, sooner or later, for the tanks and for the heavy equipment. We couldn't attack without it. That's what they told us. The next morning the tanks started coming, across the bridge, and we moved, too."

"I was already in the hospital by then."

"Where were you hit?"

"Here. And here. Big shell fragments. And one here, a small small splinter."

Looking at the town square in the rain, they smoke silently.

"It will be two years exactly, tomorrow," Avinoam says.

"A lot of *chevre* were killed in that war."

"Uhuh."

"This security watch, just between us, is bullshit."

Shaul answers, "In a small town like this there's not much of a chance they'd try anything. But in the big ports, you'd better watch."

"Who's supposed to relieve us?"

"Moshe and Saadia."

Silence.

"You know, after all that, I went back to the bananas."

They now laugh, both of them.

"Indestructible, right? Like you said."

"But I didn't stay long. Couldn't find a place for myself. Did this and that, then again a couple of months in the bananas. And then, I saw this ad in the paper. I thought, why not try it?"

"It couldn't be any worse than the others, right?"

"No, it couldn't."

Again a silence, and then Avinoam says: "A lot of good *chevre* were killed in that war: an awful lot."

They do not speak any further.

3.

I GET up very early in the morning and go ashore. The ship is moored right at the town's main square. One side of it is open to the sea. On the three remaining sides are very old houses, and narrow streets paved with large stones climb the hill on top of which the church stands. In the middle of the square is a war monument. The statue of a very slim youthful goddess of victory with small breasts leans forward with extended arms and glistens darkly in the rain. The artist's model must have been young. Perhaps he had no money to pay a full-sized woman to model for him. Or perhaps he just wanted it that way. Under Nike's feet is a white stone, and though much of the lettering has been erased by the weather, I can still read:

I prodi figli suoi cadutti
nell'ultima guerra mondiale,
GAETA
Col. Prisco Orgoglio
e con rinnovelata fede. . . .

That should mean "with renewed faith," I thought. But this was in 1919. I wasn't born yet and had no faith. I had faith later, only to lose it —definitely—still later.

At the base of the monument stand four ugly heavy mortars, one in each corner. The rain has washed the monument and the mortars clean, and tall pine trees and palms sway slightly in the wind. There is much rustling of leaves, and the raindrops glide from Nike's wings and breasts, and from the mortars.

The square is empty at that hour. A black dog crosses quickly, a Vespa roars by. The neon sign RISTORANTE is turned off, but the two others, BAR and TABACHERIA still shine in red letters.

Then it stopped raining and the sky was the color of mother-of-pearl and the church on the hill caught the first rays of the rising sun and blazed red for a few minutes. After a while the sun hid behind the clouds and the church became

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pale-yellow and sad. The two Bourbon kings in front of the church, Maximilian and Ferdinand, and the young Nike among the alpine mortars braced themselves for more rain. I returned to the ship.

4.

I HAVE a strange aversion to people who never turn off the radio in their cars: they just switch off the engine and walk away, so that when they come back and start the car, the radio starts talking immediately. My boss, driving to Haifa with his wife, gave me a lift—my car was out of order. The minute he started the engine the announcer said that the American astronauts had landed on the moon. I said I preferred the moon goddess to a moon rocket, and was given a contemptuous look. My boss, driving, looked in the rear-view mirror to check if I was serious: I was.

His wife snapped, "Nonsense. At least they've done something. They got there, to the moon. You think it's easy? It's an achievement. Moon goddesses are words, what do words achieve?"

"They sometimes transmit beauty, if they're good words," I answered. "Beauty and truth: words sometimes reveal truth."

He started to say something, then stopped. He was my boss, even if you took into account the special relationship between us. We once pulled nets together on board a deep-sea trawler, but that was long ago. Now he was running a shipping company, and I was an executive, responsible for seeing to it that the ships ran smoothly, that there were no technical problems. That was my job as supervisor. It was also, I realized, the peak of my career on that level: I could hardly go higher.

But now, on the way to Haifa in the same car, and after that look he gave me in the rear-view mirror, I knew what he thought: could I be trusted with the job while harboring such loony ideas, preferring moon goddesses to moon rockets? Why, one day I might prefer the *Flying Dutchman* to a modern, diesel-engine-propelled freighter, and what would happen then? In my office the shelves were loaded with bound volumes of *Motor Ship, Ship's Maintenance and Repairs, Tankers and Bulkcarriers, Lloyd's Annual Report,* and instruction books on all kinds of machinery. But he knew that at home there were none of these. On my private shelf Cervantes was king, while on the supervisor's desk—John Lamb, *Maintenance and Running of a Marine Diesel Engine.* I knew both volumes almost by heart: this Lamb was every marine engineer's gospel, and if you lived according to it, you would keep your crew constantly in the engine room, because the chapter on "Preparing the Engine for Work" comes right after "The Cooling of the Engine after Work." Lamb's slaves never saw the sun or the stars, except maybe through the skylight, if the chief engineer was negligent enough to let them lift their eyes for a second. So this Lamb was the right stuff, Cervantes was positively not, and my boss had his justified suspicions.

I don't imply that this was the reason, but it might be one of the reasons that I found myself in a ship's engine room once more after three years as an executive. In any case, my boss didn't protest very violently when I submitted my resignation some years ago.

Sailing again was good if you loved the sea as I did, had a decent crew, and a first assistant that could be relied upon. But on this old ship, I had a very questionable first assistant, and was so badly undermanned that I had to keep watches myself: not much of a pleasure at my age. So I had little time for anything else, except, naturally, in ports like this one where you stayed for days and days and days.

5.

ONE morning, the day after we arrived in Taranto, a block of houses appeared on the horizon. As it rapidly came nearer we saw that it wasn't a skyscraper laid horizontally, but an American aircraft carrier. It could have been the renowned and malicious wizard Merlin in disguise for all I knew. (I was, on this day, in Chapter XXI of *Don Quixote.*)

The vessel entered the outer harbor slowly but under its own power, and a swarm of tugboats came out of port and started maneuvering it into position. They moved around nervously and then took the carrier's lines and moved cautiously and slowly. You could feel how nervous and tense the tugmasters were, but nothing of it showed, you just felt it, transmitted on invisible waves. Then the anchors were dropped and the carrier became a permanent feature of the landscape for the next ten days.

Its cranes lowered big motor launches and boats, movable bridges swung out, and yellow helicopters rose from its flight deck. The deck was so crowded with planes it seemed impossible for any craft to land there, but the helicopters always came in safely. Unlike the helicopters in my head, which always crashed.

Over the decks, over the planes and bridges, towered the ship's funnel and its complicated superstructure, many stories high, adorned with all kinds of radar aerials, antennas, and mysterious gimmicks of electronic equipment. Some of the radar pans rotated permanently. Motor boats kept coming and going all the time, and in the evening much of the ship was floodlit. On the side of the funnel the number 67 appeared, so bright it must have been visible miles away. In the aft, lit from below, you could read the ship's name, in letters four feet high, across the ship's whole width: JOHN F. KENNEDY.

The next day, *Kennedy*'s children flooded the town. They came in swarms of three, four, or five

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hundred, on shore leave, in civilian clothes, a few of them wearing blue sweaters with the name John F. Kennedy written in white. The natives were perplexed: this port had served the Sixth Fleet frequently, and they were familiar with American sailors, but the crew of the atomic carrier were a special new breed, and the Italians eyed them with suspicion.

They were white, brown, yellow, black, but only a few of the blacks had Afros—Afros were on the way out in 1975. Some had inexpensive cameras, others carried portable transistor radios, some smoked big straight cigars, and still others were just tall, clean, crew-cut boys, walking the streets with hands thrust into their pockets, staring at the girls and looking quietly at the shop windows. They behaved well; the MP patrols swinging their long nightsticks had little to do.

Quantities of American goodies found their way onto the street. Tough little boys approached cars stuck in traffic jams offering cartons of Marlboro, Kent, Wrigley's gum, Hershey's chocolate bars. And still the townspeople, the inhabitants of this place in southern Italy, contined to stare at *Kennedy*'s children as if they were from outer space.

A strong wind blew along the Corso Italia, across the bridge, and down along the edge of the Little Sea—*Mare Piccolo*. Old people met the wind with severe faces, accepting it as inevitable. *Kennedy* was also inevitable, and so were the churches in the Old City, where you could find a haven in the still darkness and rest your eyes on the mild light from two candles, with figures of Christ or the Madonna between them.

But further up the street, the houses of the new town gave little protection from the wind: there, you would meet stern *carabinieri* in splendid uniforms, elegant, glistening chrome-and-glass bars, fresh flowers under crumbling monuments, put up once in the name of glory—the glory of a fallen hero or of the homeland, or of some illustrious regiment possessing chivalry and courage. All past now, swept by this chilly autumn wind.

You would meet a clear, fresh-faced kid from the *Kennedy* trying to grasp—in a calm, reserved way—the meaning of it all: of a post office, say, occupying a decrepit palace from the beginning of the last century, complete with gray columns and stone giants supporting the gate. Little boys, appearing from nowhere, attacked him: "Hey, Jack, you gotta cigarettes, Marlboro, Kent, Camel? Pay good money. Plenty *lire*. Want to meet my sister? Very clean. No? No nothing?"

The *Kennedy* boy would gently shake his head and walk on. In Italian, in dialect, the little boys abused him, called him an idiot, a queer, a sissy, an imbecile.

6.

You don't sit down in bars in Italy: there are no stools provided. You just stand there and sip your drink, rubbing elbows with people who have dropped in for an espresso or a capuccino.

I have a brandy, Vecchia Romana, Black Label, and the man next to me has a milkshake. It took a lot of time and effort to explain to the bartender what he wanted, but the bartender accepted it as a good joke, laughing a lot, and through the long process of preparing the milkshake, keeping the other two bartenders informed about what he was doing. It was a great joke with them, but the American boy was very polite and patient. When his drink was ready, the boy, his reddish hair thinning visibly in front and cut very short in the back, sipped it innocently.

"What is it you're drinking?" I asked.

"A milkshake. What about you?"

"Vecchia Romana. A very good brandy, as good as any French brandy."

"Never heard of it."

"These guys here laugh at me," he said, after a moment. "I know it even though I can't understand what they're saying. But it really is a nice drink, even though they can't make it the way it should be made. But I don't blame them. Even on board they don't make it like back home."

"Where are you from?"

"Bixby, Oklahoma. You never heard of it. A small town south of Tulsa. You know where Tulsa is?"

I knew Tulsa, improbable and incredible as it seems. Thirty-five years ago I knew a sweet girl whose name was Tamara. We used to take long walks on the wooded banks of the Vistula, holding hands or shyly kissing. She talked a lot about her older sister, Helen, who had emigrated to the States four years earlier, married, and settled down in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Very soon she would send papers and money for Tamara, and her mother, and they too would go to America. And what would I do, then? Stay in Poland, and cry for my lost love? No, I was ready to follow Tamara to the moon, to hell, if necessary. I'd find a way to get to Oklahoma.

In the end, Tamara stayed in Warsaw—the money and the papers didn't arrive in time—and was slaughtered by black-uniformed Latvians or Ukrainians a few years later. And I—well, I was here now, in a bar in Taranto, having a bitter-tasting Vecchia Romana. Best regards from Oklahoma. I still remembered snapshots of Helen, round-faced and smiling, leaning out the window of her house in Tulsa.

I wouldn't tell all this to the boy with the milkshake, whose elbow touched mine: no use spoiling the drink for him. Instead, I asked him what his job was, and he said, "Oh, I'm a radar technician." "And what do you do?"

"I'm on a tramp ship. Engineer."

"Where are you from?"

"Israel."

"That's Palestine, isn't it?"

"Was once."

"You like this town?"

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"Like any other town in southern Italy. Yes, I like them."

"It's not like Naples. We spend most of the time in Naples. I can get a milkshake in Naples any time I go ashore. Here I have to tell the barman how to mix it, step by step. Very primitive. And not very cooperative, either."

"Well, you're strangers here."

"In Naples they like us."

"You can't be liked everywhere."

He finished his drink, and reflected, his face pale, clean, and open. "No," he said, "you can't. It's a pity, isn't it?"

"It is," I said. "But that's how it is. Accept it," I added, thinking of Tamara and her sister Helen.

7.

In Taranto, I used to go with the chief mate to the cargo office at the end of the dock. There he would ask politely but persistently why our ship wasn't being loaded, and the foreman, who didn't look like an Italian but like a Pole or a Russian, would smile his bashful smile. He would look at the papers on his table, tap his pencil, and talk at great length about how three of the four large cranes were out of commission and were going to be repaired, maybe by tomorrow afternoon. (They were fairly new cranes and there was no reason why they shouldn't be working properly.) Or else it was a strike of customs inspectors down at the plant where the flatcars loaded with steel coils came from.

"So why are the other ships in port being loaded?" asked the chief mate.

"The three other ships are *bandera nazionale*," said the foreman, "customs has nothing to do with Italian ships taking steel to Ravenna or Palermo or La Spezia. But your ship is export. You can't load without having the papers stamped by customs, and the customs men are on strike."

If it wasn't cranes or customs it was the wind which was too strong. Or else a strike by the locomotive drivers. Sometimes the chief mate would lose his patience. His nose became red, then purple, and he would begin shouting. "I don't understand what's going on!" The purple from his broad nose would spread upward and cover his forehead. I worried about him.

"Zalman," I finally told him, "let's go back on board. If the locomotive drivers are on strike, we can't do anything about it. Nor can the foreman here. They're on strike, Zalman. They want higher wages, or maybe less noisy locomotives."

"What language are you speaking?" asked the foreman with genuine interest. "Is it Hebrew?"

"Yes, it's Hebrew."

"Modern Hebrew, you mean?"

"Extremely modern," I said. "Zalman, come. It's no use sitting here."

So Zalman would thank the foreman for his explanation and we would leave. That night, I knew I would go to town by myself to get drunk.

8.

At a certain point it became obvious to everyone that there must be a mysterious connection between the inexplicable delays in our loading schedule and a pending claim against our ship by a certain tugboat company. They wanted a bond of several thousand dollars to be deposited in one of the major Italian banks until the case came to court or a compromise was reached out of court.

The company claimed that two tugs had assisted our ship when it shifted from one anchorage to another while the ship's engine was out of order for five or six hours. The tugboat company did not want to deal with us directly, but only through their lawyer. The captain informed the main office in Haifa, and waited for instructions, and meanwhile the ship stood idle.

A ship staying too long in one place defies the purpose of its existence. Everybody and everything connected with it becomes infected by this terrible malady of idleness. The crew—whose relation to the ship is symbiotic—is the most exposed, and therefore the first to suffer. Two of the men had accidents and were sent home by plane and only one replacement came back; two others got sick and had to be sent to a hospital. Others were sulky, quarrelsome.

When the captain knocked at the door and proposed that we go together to the agency so that he could show me a real Godfather, I was a bit reluctant. But then I thought it might be interesting. I like the captain and saw that he wanted some support in dealing with the Mafia—he was in real trouble. So we went together, the captain with his elegant attaché case, I with the Suez Canal, the Nike statue, and all the rest in my head.

The agency dealt mainly in tourism. There were modern counters and travel posters on the walls: Morocco, Tunisia, and Spain. Three or four clerks sold plane tickets and gave information, and a tall girl with a large but thin nose and white imitation leather boots was in charge of the money. "You can change dollars here, you know," the captain said. "They do it gladly. No questions asked. No receipts. The girl does it."

We crossed the outer office with its steel and glass furniture and bright posters and went through a doorway to a back room with a high, vaulted ceiling. On the walls hung two ancient maps, one of Taranto, the other of the Adriatic Sea, and an artist's rendering of the passenger liner *Italia*. To the left behind an old-fashioned desk sat Mr. Cellini, smoking a cigar. He was a corpulent man with a large face that was red after his morning shave, an iron-gray mustache, and iron-gray hair, combed back carefully from his receding forehead. He had very light blue eyes, the blue of an early spring sky in Italy, eyes which were as elusive and restless as the birds in this sky: always in motion, they never rested for long on one spot.

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It was warm in the office, and he took off his jacket: a frightened boy ran up, took it from him, put it respectfully on a hanger and placed it in a closet. Mr. Cellini then began telephoning, sitting in his silk shirt, with broad black suspenders over his ample breast. There was a dense atmosphere around him, an almost visible aura, heavy with centuries of inherited, feudal power, undisputed, autocratic, and so vast that it seemed to take a special effort on his part to sit there in that modest chair as the owner-director of a mere travel agency. In this disguise he behaved like a benevolent, half-amused Greek god in a simple mortal's body.

And where would the most excellent chevalier of La Mancha fit into this, I wondered, sitting in this vaulted office and observing the *padrone* talking on the phone? He would not. He would only watch the show, if he were hanging here on the wall somewhere, in a dark portrait by Velasquez or El Greco. With a sardonic smile. With contempt. Because the show he would see from his elevated position would be Sancho's show. Measured on the scale of sheer human dignity this could not be on Don Quixote's level of understanding. At his best Mr. Cellini—and no matter if he was the all-powerful *padrone* my captain and I imagined him to be, or just a low-grade crook—could only act a very dignified Sancho. Watching him talk on the telephone, floating in his self-inflated solemnity, which, after all, is a trademark of the managerial class, anywhere, in any country, I tried to reconstruct his mental processes for myself. In vain. Still, the spectacle was fascinating. At a certain moment, the muscles moved in Cellini's large face, pulling the skin into a grin: the corners of the mouth would lift on both sides, and the lips part slightly, revealing long rows of small, square, yellow teeth. There was no doubt: he was smiling. And the effect of this smile, which was exactly like the permanent expression of big reptiles in a zoo, was one of great chill.

The captain, sitting at my side, shot me a look and shivered: Cellini's assistant, too, fixed his eyes on his boss who during this whole performance was speaking in local dialect and making it sound as dignified as Latin. As long as it lasted, he was as near as he could be to shedding his Sancho personality; but the power of his "stinking pride of degradation" almost pushed him out of there—like gas accumulating in a bottle of a fermenting liquid slowly forcing the cork out. At this point, I imagined, Don Quixote on the portrait would have frowned, perplexed.

But then he quit smiling, and it was over. He replaced the receiver, relit his cigar, and puffed on it. It was then that I did what I was asked to do, performed my act of great courage, asking, would you think it possible, Signor Cellini, that there is any connection between the tuboat company's claim and the delay in the loading of our ship? "Connection?" he said, his eyes running from one corner of the room to another. I only prayed that they would not land on me, and that he would not smile: that would be too hard to bear. But he did not.

"We are in southern Italy," he said curtly. "Is there a connection, you asked? I do not know. Still, being where we are, this, too, could be possible."

He returned to his papers. It was his assistant now who spoke in a very low voice on the phone to the shipping company. "Your cargo is not ready yet," he said. "They say perhaps the day after tomorrow."

The assistant, Mario, was also out of place here—like everybody else. And where did he belong? The answer is simple: on horseback, with a fur hat, with a short, thick bow in his hands and feathered arrows in his quiver. For me, he was only a Tartar.

Naturally, I had seen Mario's picture on horseback with a fur hat, in the very remote past, in one of the ancient leather-bound books for which grandfather Reuven sold his factory. A Russian painter produced this masterpiece, as far as I could remember. The picture of the Knight himself I saw that same evening, in the office of the tug company's lawyer. The *avvocato* sat, facing a wall lined with heavy volumes. Light from a bronze desk lamp flowed onto the top of the desk. The rest of the interior was in semi-darkness.

"And who is the creator of this beautiful painting, *avvocato*?" I asked as soon as we were seated.

"This? An unknown South Italian master. The portrait is of one of my ancestors, of course. We are a very old family in this town. As to the claim, gentlemen, kindly note that we do not propose to place your ship under arrest, or prevent its departure. We only want a bond—and the arbitration, whenever it takes place. . . ." His voice drifted away.

From the semi-darkness above, this little crook's ancestor looked at him with stern disapproval. The white ruffled collar was hidden in front by a triangular black beard: the nose was thin but powerful, straight, the eyes black and burning. As the lawyer rambled on and on, and the captain kept nodding to indicate his attention, I had a real urge to interrupt with apologies to ask, "Do you know, by chance, what was your illustrious ancestor's trade?" But I restrained myself: I have studied the art of restraint, I know how to do it. I doubt now that the man in the portrait was this lawyer's ancestor: he might have bought the picture in an antique shop. He was one of Sancho's breed.

Now he alternated between ill-concealed threats and plain ass-kissing. He pleaded, he tried to persuade, he pressed. Only when the captain, in despair, said, "But I told you, I must have my owners' authorization, from Haifa—and I hope to get it by telegram tomorrow," did he realize that all his efforts were in vain, he'd been wasting his time on the wrong people. Then he became nasty. He

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offered us cigars, which we refused and said: "Well—if that's the case, I am sure everything will be settled to our mutual satisfaction. And how is the general situation in your country at present? *Siempre guerra*, eh? Always, always war. How sad!"

"We have bad neighbors," said the captain.

Go fuck yourself, *avvocato*! You are, no doubt, one of those whom Don Quixote called a "monstrous and proud crew"—the Toledan merchants —and, later on, a "coward brood, slavish crew." What do you know about my country and my people? Always war, you say with your crocodile smile, sadly—a young man, "progressive," I see a copy of *L'Unità* on your desk, with photographs of Yasir Arafat and Farouk Kadoumi on the front page, and from the smirk on your face I understand that you approve of their views. You, too, long for a "democratic, secular state in Palestine." Perhaps like Byelorussia or Cuba. Or maybe like Vietnam, Angola, or Lebanon. I cannot know how far your tastes run, but there are, alas, a lot of choices. The world is full of democratic, secular states, they sprout like poisonous mushrooms after rain. The future belongs to them, you calculate in your small, dark, sleek, handsome head. And in addition to that you hate America, whose symbol, the nuclear carrier, at that moment befouls the waters of your ancient, noble harbor. You dislike and pity and look with contempt at the *Kennedy* kids roaming your streets. They're like stupid babies, you think, compared with your compatriots with their long history and the traditions of this ancient peninsula.

"Imperialism," you mumble. "Colonialism, expansionism, you and your American allies. . . ." Crowds of young, active, progressive semi-intellectuals like you repeat the same phrases, *avvocato*, all over the world—every day. But I can look quietly into your eyes. What can Arafat or Kadoumi teach me about a "democratic, secular state" that I do not know? What can they teach me at all? And even you, *avvocato*, so aware of the history and pride of the generations of your forefathers—the pride and dignity which you, a modern man, discard as anachronistic—even you cannot compete with me on this level: my ancestors wrote books of philosophy while yours were still living in the woods dressed in animal skins.

So shut up, *avvocato*, and return to your dirty business: your quixotical ancestor, in a heavy gilded frame, spits down from above on your pomaded head.

9.

One day at the breakfast table the chief mate told me: *Kennedy* is gone. I went out on deck to check; the huge vessel had disappeared. It must have sailed at daybreak or during the night, and now only the fact remained: *Kennedy* was gone. Thirteen years earlier, during intermission at a concert in the elegant Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, an excited hat-check girl came up to me and said, a terrible thing has happened. Your President is gone.

"My President?"

"Yes, Kennedy. He was shot dead in Dallas. They just confirmed it on the radio! You're an American, aren't you?" She spoke in a high voice, other people heard, and the rumor spread through the well-dressed crowd like a ripple on the surface of the sea. Outside, in the drizzle of an Amsterdam evening, boys were selling extra editions, with two-inch headlines: KENNEDY SHOT DEAD.

Then the intermission ended and people started flowing back to the concert hall, and we left. I was not an American and Kennedy was not my President, but I could not go back to listen to Chopin's second book of Etudes, played by Rubinstein. A picture from my childhood book of a man sprawled on the sand, his lance broken, floated up and dissolved: "Is he dead, father? Like grandfather?"

Something turned over in me and then settled down again, and I knew that what they called an "era"—perhaps a small one measured on the scale of human history but still, an era—had come to an abrupt end. Many things will be changed now, I thought. They were.

In Taranto, thirteen years later, with the nuclear carrier gone, standing on deck in a vaguely gray Italian morning, I felt that on our tiny scale, here and now, something would change also.

"Zalman," I told the chief mate, "they'll start loading today: perhaps we'll sail tomorrow."

"Of course," he said quietly. "The foreman already told me so this morning. The bond was deposited, yesterday, by wire."

Like a ripple on a smooth sea. My children called such a sea, before the ripple came, the sea of the dolphins. Sometimes we would go fore, to the ship's prow, and watch the bow crush the solid, heavy surface, crushing into a trough of white, sparkling crystal. With the long rake of the bow you could also see the reflection down below, like in a dark-blue mirror, of your own head, your body leaning over the protective rail. Then, out of the deep, four, five, six dolphins would appear, like torpedoes speeding on a parallel course with the ship's hull, sometimes touching it at great speed, rubbing lightly against it—free, parallel, and very powerful. At an invisible signal they would break from below the surface, jump in perfect unison a meter or two in a graceful arc, showing a black glistening body in the air, then turn before falling back into the sea, to show for a second a long white belly, always on an exactly parallel course with each other, like a group of superbly trained acrobats: powerful, compact. At another secret order, they would turn left or right, and suddenly plunge into the deep from which they had come, disappearing quickly in ever darker blue, purple. This was the dolphins' sea—the enormous stretch of smoothness and harmony and calm with a fair chance of a school of dolphins ap-

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pearing from nowhere and vanishing in the same mysterious way.

But sometimes the dolphins would not come, and you would sail, cutting the satin surface for hours or even days, until a secret force ruffled it, tiny ripples appeared in patches here and there, the surface broke into patterns: then a puff would come, a mere breath of wind, hardly deflecting the smoke of your pipe from its straight, perpendicular spiral, but strong enough to dissolve the magic: and the sea of dolphins would be gone.

On a quiet night, we sailed from Taranto, to complete loading in Genoa.

10.

You make a passage through the sea and you keep functioning on all levels —an act of equilibrium not to be lightly dismissed. Helicopters keep crashing in your head, mostly at night, but sometimes during the day as well, with an ear-splitting shriek of torn metal and great explosions of flames. Your heart pumps more quickly for a few seconds, then you quench the flames and go on, proceed, as it were, going up a few steps, or down, until you can check with a steady eye the exhaust temperatures of each cylinder on a remote-control pyrometer in the bright light of the engine room, watched anxiously from the side by the engineer and/or the motorman on duty. You register the difference between cylinder number two—305°C—and cylinder number six—325°C. You know then that the helicopter flames have again been extinguished temporarily and you make a remark to the other man about this or that. Or you make a joke or admonish him, according to your mood.

You continue your short walk in the engine room—because you function correctly on this level now—noticing, as you pass, that the upper half of the lubricating oil separator looks like the space helmet of the men who have landed on the moon. The sight glasses are like visors, but there are no eyes behind them, only black lubricating oil. You go quickly past the turbine, because the shrill, extremely high-pitched noise it makes—eight thousand revolutions per minute—can be damaging to the ears; it is this noise that has made you half deaf already, for you have listened to it for many years without protecting your ears with special earphones. Now the law orders them to be worn in the engine room, but you do not comply with the law, because you think in your conservative simple-mindedness and with mulish idiocy, how can I hear a wrong noise in the engine if I have these mufflers on my ears? And they increase your claustrophobia as well.

You open the lid of the thrust bearing and see muddy oil flowing heavily there among the pads, and you think about the clear stream of water breaking in furious tiny waves on stones and pebbles in a wood, somewhere two thousand miles north of here and thirty odd years in the past. You put your hand on the rough cast-iron casing of the bearing to ascertain the temperature—you do not trust the thermometer mounted there for you have seen too many thermometers showing wrong temperatures—and you notice that the man who last painted this housing with cream-yellow paint did a lousy job of it, smeared it on impatiently, whereas the oil painting over the *avvocato*'s head, in semi-darkness, with its somber clarity, made you suck in your breath. Of course, the painter did not have to chip away the rust first, he painted on canvas, but this motorman, or oiler, or whoever the hell he was, didn't bother much about the rust either, he just smeared over it with his brush.

You close the lid of the thrust bearing and touch the gland of the propeller shaft (bent over halfway because the shaft tunnel isn't high enough to stand upright). Then you return on the other side of the engine, past the boiler, past the turbine, compressors, generators, checking them as you pass, and well aware that they look as they should but also like something else: like patterns on a tapestry which do not belong to the design, but exist only in your head, but nevertheless exist, and if you try to persuade yourself to the contrary, they periodically but persistently return to remind you they're here and no use denying the fact. The same with configurations of flowers or books or even ashes and cigarette butts in an ashtray, or the easiest and most obvious one of all—the clouds in the sky. Popular, too: many people notice them, many have written about them. Therefore, one should not make fun of anyone who sees giants instead of windmills: giants are there, for sure, though I myself saw Calvary crosses with crucified people on them; or helicopter blades—but this is my very private vision.

Now, having assured myself that the generator, as a generator, runs smoothly, I send a friendly wave of the hand and a smile to the engineer keeping watch and climb the stairs up out of this engine room, and continue to sail on a fresh, rippled, dolphinless sea, heading north toward Genoa, which should be the last port in this voyage.

11.

Merchant ships are sent over the seas to carry cargoes from one country to another, but mainly to make profit for their owners. Remember this. The profit factor has an overwhelming influence on the lives of ships and crews—all other considerations are almost meaningless. It is of no interest to a good Greek shipowner in what condition his ships and seamen are as long as they make the passages according to schedule and as long as the cargo arrives dry and in acceptable condition. The tendency is to reduce everything not directly connected with profit to an absolute minimum: minimum safety conditions, minimum crews, minimum wages. Minimum spare parts carried and used.

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Our Israeli shipowners always looked up to the Greeks, seeing them as shining examples and ideals. Saving at any price was the motto of this company, and nobody dared to laugh at the joke that sometimes the cost of saving rose sky-high, and a certain confusion resulted. But the principle remained unshaken.

Now, if the basic philosophy of your life is Marxist in any form, you'll direct your efforts toward reducing the profits of your owners, thereby increasing your own. My friend, the company boss, would hotly deny this, saying you can find a compromise, a golden mean, between your yearning for profits and all other valid considerations. I said nonsense, either you're a virgin or not, there is no middle course here.

The donkeyman knocked at the door, a sheet of paper in his hand. "I haven't got enough overtime this month," he says. "It says only ninety-eight hours."

"But that's exactly how much you worked. I have the copy of your form here."

"Don't you understand that overtime is the biggest part of my wages? I have to support a family!"

"But I can't approve payment of hours and days you haven't worked!"

"With all due respect, chief, you don't know anything about it. You come here for one or two trips, and want to change the world."

"On the contrary, I don't want to change anything."

"Every chief signs these overtime sheets, it's normal procedure, the office knows about it! And approves of it."

"Willingly?"

"No, but they have no choice. They're bound by union agreements; somebody has to run these ships."

"But how can I pay you for what you didn't do? Tell me, how!"

The donkeyman is clever, he sees there is no sense discussing these matters with a man who doesn't understand the simplest facts of life. He collects his overtime sheets and goes away, and will gladly spread the news that the chief is soft in the head. But I'll be damned if I pay for work that wasn't done. Let the crooks in the office find some other, cleaner way to compensate people for the low wages they're paying.

But one fault of mine is seeing people in other contexts, in other situations than the ones in which I encounter them. It is a strange deficiency that spoils my ability to deal with reality. While this donkeyman discusses his overtime with me, here and now, I see him also—in spite of myself—at home, with his wife, laughingly explaining to her: look, I had that strange old fool this trip, making a fuss about overtime. They take him on once or twice a year because he was one of the company's founders or something, an old-timer, a real relic, and a kibbutznik on top of everything, which means he hasn't the remotest idea what money is.

She does not exactly know what to do with this information, and says nothing. He says, never mind, I'll add what's missing here on the next trip.

Now that he's gone I enjoy the solitude of this tiny cabin: the sharp, smoky taste of the scotch, the sweet, slightly metallic flavor of the tea, and the bright clean light of the fluorescent tube over my desk. Clearly, I enjoy sailing more than arriving, always I love being under way, suspended, in passage. It is smoother, easier, when you are under way: the tensions are located at the arrivals and departures.

I also like to think that in this moment, in this tiny spot of space and time, between the past and the future, there are seventeen-thousand-six-hundred-twenty-seven ships sailing in the sea, which means that the same number of my colleagues, my counterparts, whom I'll never meet or see, exist, act, do, think, feel, laugh, read, drink, dream. This secret knowledge is conveyed to me through very special waves, passing through the sea and penetrating easily through the iron shells of the ships' hulls.

Perhaps there is even a direct connection between this ability of mine to see the seventeen-thousand-six-hundred-twenty-seven engineers now, before the glass raised by my hand reaches my lips, and the clear picture of my donkeyman, engaged in intimate conversation with his wife, three weeks from now. But however it may be, it comes to me naturally, without any effort on my part. Along the same lines, I can, looking at next year's car model, glistening with chrome, see it rusted and dented, hardly more than a heap of broken metal, in some back yard or in an automobile graveyard, just two or three years from now.

One day, thirty years ago, in March, I saw a hundred Flying Fortresses in a clear sky, glistening like small silver flowers, flying in one long line, heralding liberation. A few years later, somewhere in Germany, I saw the same planes, partly covered with torn tarpaulins, their paint peeling, and the asphalt strip on which they stood covered with litter, empty cans and cigarette boxes, pieces of paper, and tall grass growing out of the deep cracks in the runway. The sky was gray, it was drizzling, nobody was looking at the Flying Fortresses whose past was glory in the sky. I asked an old man, squatting in a tin hut at the end of the runway, in shabby civilian clothes, unshaven, drawing on a cold pipe, what's going to happen to these planes? And he looked at me with colorless eyes, shrugged, and said, what did you expect? Scrap.

Perhaps the memory of the glory persists. Not always in war monuments and history books; perhaps, rather, in books of knight errantry. Or simply in human memory: in your skull and mine.

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Marge Piercy and Ann Beattie

Pearl K. Bell

MARGE PIERCY is a prolific novelist and poet, a one-time organizer for SDS, who has become a spokesman for radical feminism. Though she presents herself as a revolutionary, battling against orthodoxies of every kind—political, cultural, sexual—her novels are surprisingly conventional. In conception and style, in the grim determination of her didactic intentions, her work is reminiscent of the radical-proletarian fiction of the 1930's, in which the message outweighed the manner of its telling. In each of her six novels, Miss Piercy seizes upon a problem that she regards as symptomatic of a sick, unjust, patriarchal society, and builds a heavily documented narrative around that problem to drive her moral home.

In *Woman at the Edge of Time* she concentrated on mistreatment of the insane; in *Small Change* on women trapped in repressive marriages; in *Dance the Eagle to Sleep* on the exploitation of radical women by their sexist comrades; in *The High Cost of Living* on the high cost of being a lesbian in a bigoted academic milieu. Through the exhaustive detailing of social and sexual atrocities, Miss Piercy turns her novels into indictments crackling with outrage. Now and then she has tried to leaven the heavy freight of actuality that is her stock in trade with utopian imaginings, in the spirit of Doris Lessing's more elaborate science fiction, as in the futuristic dream world envisioned in *Woman at the Edge of Time*. But these fantasies are just as programmatic as her realistic novels. In the perfect society of the future, human suffering and social evil will have been eradicated, and it will simply be the obverse of the present ugly male-dominated capitalist reality: androgynous, humane, egalitarian, and sweeter than springtime.

In her most recent novel, *Vida*,* Marge Piercy looks back with elegiac nostalgia to the 1960's and the exhilarations of the anti-war movement as remembered by Vida Asch, a Weatherman fugitive. Wanted by the FBI for a bombing raid on the Mobil Oil building in 1970, Vida has succeeded in surviving underground for almost a decade by fabricating false identities, hiding out with "straight" sympathizers, and dyeing her glorious auburn mane an unobtrusive mousy brown.

When we first meet the beautiful guerrilla in 1978, she has traveled east in slow stages, from her most recent safe-house in Los Angeles, to have a brief reunion with her husband in New York and renew her ties with the leaders of the Network (Marge Piercy's name for Weatherman), which has fallen on hard times as its ranks have dwindled. Part of the cadre has been caught and imprisoned, others have given themselves up, and the surviving fugitives are quarreling among themselves. Now that the Vietnam war is over, they are no longer able to agree on the issues still worth struggling and bombing for. Even the redoubtable Vida, normally immune to demoralizing doubts about the cause, suffers moments of feeling "as if she had outlived her own times, a creature produced by an earlier conglomeration of demands, judgments, necessities, passions, crises. Like a salmon that had forced her way upstream to spawn, she lay dying in the backwaters." But she rebukes herself sternly for such lapses—"As you sit in the sun pitying yourself . . . in Chile and South Africa women are being tortured to death. Never forget. The same war"—and soldiers on.

While Vida anxiously marks time before the Network board can meet in the seclusion of rural Vermont, she searches out faithful and lapsed believers in New York and New England—she is always in need of money and a place to hide—and joins forces with Joel, an army deserter who has been on the run for two years. Joel is ten years younger than Vida, who is by now thirty-seven; after the two become lovers, he begs her to tell him what she was doing "when you were my age." The request provides Marge Piercy with her means of recreating the late great carnival of the 60's, when, as Vida remembers an idyllic Smash-the-State fair in Central Park in 1967, "a great thick fog had lifted from the American landscape and people in the new sunlight were mixing colors and sounds and cultures and life styles."

In evoking the 60's Miss Piercy provides some unsentimental glimpses of the sexual infighting and unmediated rage that were endemic to the radical scene. But she is obviously uneasy about these revelations, and must make up for them with large antidotes of uplift, as in her tableau of the ultimate peace parade:

> . . . old people and mothers pushing strollers and men in suits and kids in body paint and rabbis and priests and shamans and marching bands. Everybody would belong—everybody but the ruling class. More and more people were against the war; more and more people were for change. The climate of the age was warming. . . . Now there were social workers for peace, sanitation workers for peace, secretaries for peace, zoo keepers for peace.

Torn between the unvarnished truth of the radical peace movement as she lived it and her will to affirm its idealistic impunity, Miss Piercy all too easily transcends

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the difficulty with the consolations of cant. The result is sometimes unintentionally funny. Thus, when Vida is tempted to belt some raucous children who are disrupting a serious political argument, her hand is stayed because "she did not think that Vietnamese hit their kids and she knew that Native Americans didn't; it must be incorrect." Hard as one tries to find a flicker of irony in such pompous reflections, the effort is futile. And although the bleak desolation of the fugitives' underground life as Marge Piercy describes it might lead one to think that she has had second thoughts about Weatherman tactics, or questions the moral and practical relevance of "movement" thinking to present-day reality, she makes it abundantly clear that to her such revisionist skepticism is heresy.

What is in some ways most bewildering about *Vida* is the way Marge Piercy's ideological severity toward bourgeois values—"We can't make a new society in the shell of the old if we're living a middle-class existence"—is insidiously overwhelmed by her rather girlish enthusiasm for the good things of that life. Food is not merely mentioned in passing, but dwelled upon: we get the whole menu, the appropriate wines, and sometimes a recipe thrown in for good measure. When Vida puts on a nightgown, it is a "slinky tangerine Empire-waisted slit-to-the-thigh nightgown." And if you were wondering how to tell radicals from the rest of womankind, the answer is: "A few movement women used eyebrow pencils or eyeliners, but nobody in the movement ever wore eye shadow. It was one of those magic lines of demarcation."

Vida is crammed with such arcane trivia, the sort of padding that was left out of an earlier and far more affecting fictional account of the anti-war apostles of violence, M.F. Beal's *Amazon One,* published in 1975. In that powerful novel, Miss Beal captured the derangement, the complacency, the resentful and terrified confusion of the Weatherman mentality in fiercely compressed prose that had the authentic ring of imaginative and historical truth. Next to M.F. Beal's radical activists, Marge Piercy's pale into ideological cartoons. *Vida,* almost twice as long as *Amazon One,* is stale and self-indulgent, leaving no breathing space or room for thought between writer and protagonist. At the end of this revolutionary soap opera, our heroine is still free, still running, and charged with unfounded confidence, as she walks into the sunset, that "What swept through us and cast us forward is a force that will gather and rise again." Those who have no sense of history can believe anything.

It would be hard to think of a literary temperament less like Marge Piercy's than that of Ann Beattie, whose second novel, *Falling in Place,** is as coolly detached as *Vida* is hotly opinionated. For Marge Piercy, the world is a place of heady conflict between absolutes. Right and wrong, good and bad, are defined and judged with a rigid political certainty that is impatient of intellectual complexity and disturbing emotion. Ann Beattie, at the opposite extreme, sees a world devoid of all such schematic fitness and order, political or otherwise. She describes a wayward human landscape that is bereft of meaning, in which everyone is chronically vagrant and capricious, and unmoored.

The squalor of aimless souls has been Miss Beattie's obsessive subject in two collections of stories, *Distortions* and *Secrets and Surprises,* and the novel *Chilly Scenes of Winter* (recently made into a movie called *Head Over Heels*). By now the chaotic world of post-everything dropouts has come to seem her private literary fiefdom, populated by men and women well over thirty, educated to no purpose, living on family handouts, unattached and uncommitted. Terrified by silence, they fend it off continually with rock, dope, and the insatiable pursuit of whimsy and new kicks. They all turn up again in *Falling in Place,* but by now it is drearily clear that Ann Beattie has nothing fresh to reveal about these disaffected drifters, who in their sheer nihilism make Marge Piercy's bombers look like Latter-Day Saints. Confronted once again with these hollow and disordered spirits, whose habits and gestures and speech Miss Beattie knows with flawless intimacy, we are unable to feel anything but boredom and distaste for the muddled weirdness she records with such disingenuous objectivity.

As though she realizes how narrow and unrewarding this familiar ground has become, Miss Beattie has widened the range of her scrutiny in *Falling in Place* by writing not only about dropouts but also about an unhappy suburban family and its dreadful children. But she moves into John Cheever's territory without any of his mournful humanity, and the people she finds there turn out to be not very different from and certainly no more admirable than her aging hippies.

After eighteen years of marriage, the only language John Knapp and his wife Louise have in common is the weaponry of insult and bitter sarcasm. Their ten-year-old son, John Joel, is fat and miserable, his only friend a malevolent boy of twelve whose idea of fun is sticking pinholes in his mother's diaphragm and acting out the sadistic comics he collects. Mary, John Joel's nasty fifteen-year-old sister, is forced to go to summer school because she failed English. The only reason she wants to pass the summer course is "just so she would never have to read, or have read to her, another book." Her English teacher, Cynthia, a graduate student at Yale, has a flaky lover who is tormented by nightmares about atom-bomb fireballs meant just for him; awake, he is usually stoned, his only occupation the manic squandering of a sizable inheritance.

Though Cynthia is the novel's only character that one can imagine possibly escaping from the disarray, for she alone has made an active and rational choice in life instead of passively letting things happen, it is soon clear that she is no less doomed than the rest of them. At heart she is as dislocated as her lover, subject to numbing depression, often as helplessly mired in swamps of fragmented inconsequence as her adolescent students. Thinking about her own

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adolescence, she summons up this ragged skein of memory:

> Her boyfriend from high school had become a Marine and later acted in an underground porn film about Vietnam that she never got to see. Someone who had seen the film told her that he was in drag in the film—a peasant woman who got raped. The person who had seen it and told her that was pretty unreliable, though. He himself was a failed actor, and it would be like him to be jealous of her old boyfriend and to make up a lie like that. When she turned twenty-one, her old boyfriend had had a birthday cake that said "OM" made for her at Carvel. That was after the Marines, and before the porn film. During the break, there had been an ice-cream cake.

It is not just *things* that happen to these idle souls, but thoughts and words and feelings: everything flows together with deadpan randomness—laundromats, brand names, cute T-shirts and bumper stickers, rock songs and campy movies, snatches of wispy talk overheard in the New York coffee shops and department stores and offices and Connecticut houses through which Miss Beattie's specimens drift in a listless stupor. While such wads of dissociated irrelevance have some times worked in Ann Beattie's short stories, they become unendurably monotonous in a novel unless the purposeless inertia is disrupted by some decisive action.

That indispensable thunderclap, the dramatic, unexpected event which should stop everyone in his tracks for a long moment of unaccustomed lucidity, occurs more than halfway through *Falling in Place*: John Joel, egged on by his friend Parker, aims a supposedly unloaded gun at his detested sister, and a bullet tears through her side. But the incident alters nothing, enforces no lucidities. Mary survives, her stunted soul unchastened by the brush with death. Her brother will spend half a lifetime with psychiatrists, but we know it will make little difference. Her parents, for a while understandably shaken, will probably divorce and probably remarry (John has a very young and feckless mistress in New York), and their lives will remain essentially the same. Moral apathy has so completely displaced genuine emotion in all these corroded hearts that their lives must go on as always, untouched by the promise of change and redemption.

But one cannot really assert this with any confidence, for who can be sure that Ann Beattie is passing judgment of such a kind—indeed, of any kind—on the deplorable persons she has transfixed with her keen and indefatigably watchful eye? Not once does she reveal the secret of her fascination with all this exasperating flotsam, and *Falling in Place* does entirely without those moments of wacky farce that often brighten her short stories. Making no comic gestures, taking everything in with her customary neutrality and giving it all back, Miss Beattie seems oblivious to her readers, unperturbed by their inevitable irritation and boredom.

Though her stories can be strange and clever, though she is an undeniable original, what Ann Beattie entirely fails to arouse in us as we yawn through *Falling in Place* is any conviction that the men, women, and children whose odd and empty lives she transcribes so expertly count for something that deserves our attention. It scarcely needs saying that we do not have to love a novelist's characters in order to be stirred by them, or that great literary art has always been as much, in fact more, concerned with despicable and wrong-headed and destructive human nature as it is with virtue. But we can respond strongly to empty and meaningless lives in fiction only to the extent that the writer is alive to the human consequences of such emptiness and can persuade us that his invented creatures *matter* in some authentic way. If we do not become involved, all we can feel is tedium and indifference.

Still, Miss Beattie's flat, impassive, unlyrical voice—the style that is a kind of anti-style, absorbing anything that comes to mind because one thing is no better and no worse than another—may very well suit the prevailing mood as Marge Piercy's thumping optimism cannot. It is as though, when anxious uncertainty is the very air we breathe, nothing seems worth the effort of moral judgment, and in any case it would make no difference to the way things are. They may, and then again they may not, just fall into place.

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Why Weill?

Samuel Lipman

SUDDENLY, within the limited world of New York opera, Kurt Weill is all the rage. During the 1979-80 season, the Metropolitan Opera produced Weill's 1929 collaboration with Bertolt Brecht, *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, and also chose it for one of the company's valuable evenings on nationwide television. The New York City Opera has given similar exposure this past season to its revival of Weill's 1947 setting of Langston Hughes's adaptation of the Elmer Rice play *Street Scene*. The City Opera, furthermore, has just introduced an augmented adaptation of the Weill-Georg Kaiser play with music, *Silverlake* (1932); this new production, a kind of world premiere, was recorded shortly after the opening performance by Nonesuch for early release.

Not only have the stagings of Weill been seen and heard in New York opera houses and on television screens across the country. Reams of writing about Weill and his music are also becoming available to the interested reader. Journalists and music historians—building on the work of David Drew, an English critic and lonely laborer in the Weill vineyard for the past generation—have been emerging to tell the story of Weill's life and evaluate his pieces. Thus, beyond the flurry of newspaper and magazine coverage of the recent performances, there has just appeared a discursive and admiring biography of the composer, *The Days Grow Short*, by Ronald Sanders,* and the past year has also seen the publication of what reads like an expanded doctoral dissertation, *Kurt Weill in Europe*,† by Kim H. Kowalke.

Because Weill was highly successful twice while he lived—the first time after the 1928 premiere of *The Threepenny Opera* in Berlin, and the second as a composer of Broadway musicals just before and during World War II—and then again just after his death with the New York production of *The Threepenny Opera* in 1954, the present interest cannot be understood simply as the discovery of a relatively unknown figure. It is rather a current manifestation of the appeal of a composer at once easy to grasp and difficult to categorize, and of a music at once off-putting and pleasing.

As A man, Kurt Weill was a product of the cultural flowering, under conditions of relative toleration, of German Jewry. He was born in 1900 in Dessau, also the birthplace of the most famous exemplar of the German-Jewish tension between particularism and universalism, Moses Mendelssohn. Whereas Mendelssohn was the son of a Torah scribe, Weill's father was a cantor and a composer of sacred music; as such he participated in the assimilation of traditional Jewish chanting to the then regnant oratorio style associated with German Protestantism.

Of three siblings, Weill was the least inclined toward religion. Nevertheless, an outlet for his natural musicality was easily found in the rich secular musical life of Dessau—in particular an operatic theater strongly Wagnerian and patronized by the local nobility. In a minor way, Weill (who began composing at the age of ten or eleven) was the direct beneficiary of this patronage, as he was also of the contact with Jewish music lovers so often available then to the young and artistically gifted.

His first entry into a larger musical world came in 1918 with his matriculation at the famous *Hochschule für Musik* in Berlin. During his single semester there he studied composition with Engelbert Humperdinck, the disciple of Wagner and the author of *Hansel and Gretel*. In the difficult economic conditions following the German defeat in World War I, he made an attempt at supporting himself through minor conducting jobs in provincial opera houses. Meanwhile he continued to compose—a string quartet, a cello sonata, two one-act operas, and an oratorio based on the Song of Songs (all still unpublished and in some cases lost). Then, in December 1920, Weill was accepted as a student at the Prussian Academy of Arts in the master class of Ferruccio Busoni, the Italo-German composer whose greatest fame was as a legendary piano virtuoso. Before his encounter with Busoni, Weill had been under the spell of the German romantics; under the influence of Busoni's idiosyncratic combination of modernism and classicism, Weill's music began to reflect the stirrings of the avant-garde and the concomitant rejection of the 19th century.

An early document of this turn to the present may be found in Weill's First Symphony, begun in 1920 but drastically altered upon its completion in the first months of his association with Busoni. As the symphony stands now, it is a piece of absolute music in the sense that it employs only instruments and sets no words, but it was in fact written under the inspiration of a socialist-pacifist play by Johannes Becher. Becher was soon to discover the Marxism which allowed him to end his life as a culture bu-

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† University Microfilms International Research Press, 589 pp., $34.50.

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reaucrat in East Germany after World War II; prophetically enough, the play which inspired Weill was called *Workers, Peassants, and Soldiers: The Awakening of a People to God.* In its final form, Weill's First Symphony owes something to the harsh expressionism of early-modern Schoenberg, and something also to the melodic ethos of Mahler.

But after a few other pieces, including the Violin Concerto of 1924 with its Stravinsky-like timbre, Weill stopped writing purely instrumental music (and would only make one further essay in that area, the Second Symphony of 1934) in favor of music utilizing the power of words. This turn no doubt owed something to Weill's background, which combined the worlds of synagogue music and the provincial opera theater. But a more important cause must have been the impulse which has so often driven composers toward opera: the desire to find a wider audience. The audience Weill had in mind was not the kind which had in the past supported what he called "socially-exclusive, 'aristocratic' art"; instead he envisioned a public composed of "simple, naive, unassuming and traditionless listeners, who, trained by work, sport, and technical skill, bring along their healthy sense of fun and seriousness, good and bad, old and new." It may be questioned whether Weill ever made a serious attempt to find this pot of artistic gold at the end of the proletarian rainbow. It is, however, clear that the very act of looking for a broad audience meant a drastic change from the sophisticated and relatively inaccessible world of musical modernism to which Weill was in other ways sympathetic; in fact the rest of Weill's compositional career was to be marked by precisely the search for effect which lies at the heart of 19th-century romanticism.

WEILL'S first mature attempt at opera was the nondescript—though initially successful—*Der Protagonist* (1924-25), a collaboration with the German expressionist playwright Georg Kaiser. Heard today in an obviously poor tape of an Italian radio broadcast, the music seems heavy for all its dryness of texture; one excerpt, a Pantomime for both instruments and voices, has been recorded, but possesses little distinct musical character.

Another 1925 work makes a more attractive impression. *Der neue Orpheus,* a cantata for soprano, violin, and orchestra written to a text by the poet Iwan Goll, is a retelling of the famous Greek legend in the setting of modern Berlin. The work marked an important way station on Weill's road to a more accessible style, employing suggestions of popular music drawn from the burgeoning cabaret world. This tendency became more pronounced in the 1925-26 *Royal Palace,* again to a text by Goll, which incorporated such popular dance forms as the tango and the foxtrot, and was marked by the sharp, insistent rhythms later so characteristic of Weill. One more work of these years closed out Weill's searchings: *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren* ("The Czar Has His Picture Taken"), a 1927 collaboration with Kaiser, in which Weill again used popular dance forms. Clearly for his breakthrough only one thing was lacking —a librettist with his finger on the pulse of the times.

THAT librettist, of course, turned out to be Bertolt Brecht. The partisans of Weill and Brecht differ as to the relative importance of each in their joint efforts. Neither Sanders in his Weill biography nor Kowalke in his musicological study is immune to this kind of special pleading for Weill. And on Brecht's behalf, Eric Bentley goes so far as to claim basic authorship for some of Weill's most famous music. Whoever influenced whom must remain a moot question; Weill and Brecht were both overflowing with theories about what they thought they were doing and what others should be doing.

Much critical writing has been devoted to these theories—in particular Brecht's idea of epic theater and alienation, and Weill's conception of "gestic" music and opera as a return to the dramatic musical theater of Mozart. Though the precise application of these notions seemed vague, their general drift was clear enough: the world of individual and private concerns was to be transvalued through a simplified and schematic presentation of generalized symbols and mass emotions. In art similar movements were involving the replacement of the easel painting by the poster; in the theater it produced the rise of the agit-prop play. But whatever the art-form, the artist's goal was to find and merge with the audience of the democratized future—the people.

In theory this new audience was located in the working class, but where Brecht and Weill actually found it was in the same middle class which had for so long supported high culture. This once proud social alignment had, however, been mortally weakened by military defeat and economic disintegration, and in its weakened condition it was open to the fatal allure of two creations of its enemies —radical politics and popular culture. Brecht, who was soon to become an out-and-out Marxist and, some highly trumpeted divagations notwithstanding, would remain a Communist hero for the rest of his life, recognized the implications of all this more clearly than Weill. Yet despite the fact that Weill seems to have shunned organizational affiliations and loyalties and that according to his wife and exponent, Lotte Lenya, he was (at this time in Berlin) "a liberal like everyone else," it is obvious from the work he did with Brecht just how closely their views coincided.

Their first collaboration, in 1927, involved a setting by Weill of several poems from Brecht's *Die Hauspostille* ("Domestic Breviary") about life in Mahagonny, an imaginary American boom town where the possession of money is the only virtue, opportunism the only standard of conduct, and alcohol the universal solvent. Weill's musical parody of a cantata, called the *Mahagonny Songspiel,* contained one of his greatest hits, the "Alabama Song," a sinuous melody, fairly dripping with sexual insinuation and languorous eroticism. Elsewhere the music is prevailingly light, tuneful, and attractive. The style is unabashedly popular, and the influence of American jazz—

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Weill was a great admirer of Louis Armstrong—everywhere apparent. Gone altogether are the clotted sonorities and the free tonality of Weill's earlier music.

The *Mahagonny Songspiel* was first staged at the Baden-Baden Festival, at that time the shrine of contemporary music, in the summer of 1927. The work was a sensation, both for the music and for the production which placed Lotte Lenya in the middle of a boxing ring and employed actors wearing overalls to troop around with placards bearing left-wing slogans. The reclame was sufficient to inspire Brecht and Weill to enlarge the short work into a full-length opera, portentously called *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* ("The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny").

BEFORE completing this task, however, they took the time to produce a work which more than anything else was to make their fame. *Die Dreigroschenoper*—in its English version *The Threepenny Opera*—was written for a young Berlin producer who was looking for a modern play with a musical score. The idea of updating John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* (1728) had come to Brecht from one of his assistants, and it immediately impressed the producer as "smelling of theater." The story is, as can quickly be seen, at heart the same as that of Brecht's *Mahagonny* poems. Morality is reversed: the hero is a highwayman, beggars are millionaires, and true aristocracy comes from success in crime.

In his score Weill now continued the procedure he had followed in the *Mahagonny* suite—a succession of musical numbers, each constituent song being complete in itself. In *The Threepenny Opera*, as in so much of what he was to write from now on, the musical momentum, insofar as it existed at all, was interrupted at regular intervals for spoken dialogue and stage action. For Weill this was a personal discovery linking his work to Mozart and to *Der Freischütz* of Weber; for those who had come to expect music to absorb the drama, all Weill had managed was to write incidental music for the theater.

These niceties aside, the *Dreigroschenoper* was a phenomenal success. The combination of the gutter cynicism so beloved of Brecht and the jazzy tunefulness of Weill scored instantly; eventually the biggest hit was the opening "Ballad of Mack the Knife," inserted at the last moment to please an actor who wished to show off his fancy clothes (though it was later given to someone with a less pleasant voice). Just how broad was the appeal of this recital of the hero's evil deeds may be gathered from its fourth stanza (the words written, it must be remembered, by a supporter of proletarian internationalism and set by a Jewish composer):

Und Schmul Meier bleibt verschwunden
Und so mancher reiche Mann
Und sein Geld hat Mackie Messer
*Dem man nichts beweisen kann.**
(And Samuel Meier disappeared for good,
As well as many a rich man,
And Mack the Knife has all his money
Though you cannot prove a thing.)

How percipient to have found, in the Berlin of 1928, a sentiment on which Left and Right could both agree!

Barely hidden beneath the nihilism and the romanticizing of violence was a vein of maudlin sentimentality informing both Brecht's dramatic conception and Weill's music. To the themes of true love among the fallen and the romantic pirate of legend Brecht added the happiest of happy endings—reprieve from the gallows combined with instant accession to the aristocracy—while Weill's music alternated honky-tonk melodies with jazzy ostinatos and an occasional parody of a religious chorale. This mockery of middle-class conventions could only profit from middle-class self-hatred, and from the remaining attachment of the audience to the sentiments being parodied.

NEITHER Weill nor Brecht could have been altogether happy with the reputation for frivolity they so quickly gained from the *Dreigroschenoper* and they made several ineffectual attempts at thoroughgoing seriousness: notably the *Berliner Requiem* of 1928, written on commission from the German Radio to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Spartacist uprising, and a "didactic cantata" on the subject of Lindbergh's transatlantic solo flight, *Der Lindberghflug* of 1929—high-minded, mostly solemn, and dull.

The full-length operatic version of *Mahagonny* possesses more interest. As the recent Metropolitan Opera production makes clear, Brecht's book is immensely powerful and fascinatingly perverse in its presentation of man as a beast. Weill's music, however, again cast in the form of conventional song numbers and orchestral interludes, with most of the action carried by spoken dialogue, is thinner in content than the score of *Dreigroschenoper*, and overall there is an air of repetition.

His score for the next collaboration with Brecht, *Happy End* (1929), the story of a Salvation Army effort to save some gangsters, was replete with what had by now become his familiar banalities—marches, hymns, ballades. In the case of this work, Brecht's book was no better than Weill's music. The explicit social message here overwhelmed the sentimentality, and not surprisingly the price was lack of popular success.

So too, and even more clearly, with *Der Jasager* ("The Yes-sayer"), of 1930. Intended for performance by high-school students, it concerns a boy's desire to obtain medicine from a distant place for his sick mother, his inability to sustain the pace of those with whom he is traveling to that place, and his agreeing to being killed in order to allow the others to proceed safely. The twin themes of totalitarian acquiescence and the subordination of the individual to the group were to occupy Brecht for much of his creative life. Indeed, the similarity of *Der Jasager* to Brecht's notorious *Die Massnahme* ("The Measures Taken")

* Those words, not surprisingly, were cut from the 1954 New York revival by the work's adapter, Marc Blitzstein, and replaced by innocuous filler.

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—written in collaboration with the composer Hanns Eisler the same year and asserting the need for revolutionaries to liquidate those who even unwittingly betray them—only confirms his ultimate moral decision to come down on the side of tyranny.*

Weill's music for the parable of Leninist virtue Brecht produced in *Der Jasager* is plain, plodding, and repetitious, though in its treatment of the relationship between mother and son it is not without its mawkish aspects. Indeed, given the means to which Weill restricted himself in order to make the work performable by young and untrained students, such a musical outcome was no doubt inevitable. And yet the very plainness and repetition of Weill's music seem to reinforce the idea of obedience to a simple, clear, and efficient authority.

On several grounds—his progressivism, his work with Brecht, his use of mockery, and above all his Jewish origin—Weill was anathema to the coming Hitler regime. The premiere of *Mahagonny* had been greeted by a popular disturbance in which the Nazis may well have had a hand; a subsequent performance in Oldenburg was canceled under Nazi pressure. Still more ominous was the reaction to Weill's final large work of his German period, *Der Silbersee* ("The Silverlake") of 1932, a collaboration with Georg Kaiser. Though ideological radicalism here went by the boards, as Weill's musical radicalism had gone sometime before, the Nazis disrupted a performance in Magdeburg and soon made performance anywhere in Germany impossible.

In *Silbersee* Weill wrote a score remarkable, even for him, in its indulgence of pastiche: parody and sincerity, conventional opera and cabaret, waltz and tango—all are thrown into the pot. Just how little the effort succeeded in arousing the audience may be gathered from the wholesale changes and additions the New York City Opera has found it necessary to make in its current production. Uniquely in the case of what we are told is a major work by a composer deserving serious attention, the published credits for the production read:

> *Silverlake*, opera in two acts by Kurt Weill. Libretto by Hugh Wheeler, based on the original libretto by Georg Kaiser. Lyrics by Lys Symonette. Additional music from Weill's incidental music to Strindberg's "Gustaf III" and Leo Lania's "Konjunktur" integrated by Miss Symonette.

Like so many artists of his time and place, Weill was now to be on the run. His first stop was France where, in addition to composing some trifles *à la française*, he wrote the music to his final work with Brecht, the ballet with singing *Die sieben Todsünden* ("The Seven Deadly Sins"), a title Brecht later made more explicit by adding *der Kleinbürger* ("of the Petit Bourgeoisie"). This tale of two sisters, one speaking for respectable virtue, the other indulging instinct and desire, ends with virtue cynically rewarded as they retire from their wanderings to a small house purchased by the licentious one's earnings. What could earlier in Weill's music career have been construed as at least on one level hostile parody here became mere entertainment, for with *Die sieben Todsünden* Weill was in fact well on the way to his later American career as a composer of Broadway musicals.

Further evidence of this trend can be adduced from Weill's Second Symphony (1934), his last purely instrumental composition. Written in Paris, it represented an unambiguous rejection of the modernism of its 1921 predecessor; unhappily, like so many artistic retreats, it issued in vapidity.

In emigrating to America in 1935, Weill joined a flood of refugee intellectuals who were about to establish the first resident cosmopolitanism this culture had ever known. Viewed from the vantage point of today's hard-headed cultural internationalism, some of the early stirrings of this new sophistication are embarrassing. Such was the case with Weill's first major American project, a grandiose scheme hatched in the fertile brain of Meyer Weisgal, the fabled Zionist fundraiser. Weisgal aimed at nothing less than staging the entire history of the Jewish people, written by Franz Werfel and directed by Max Reinhardt. The size of the undertaking—it was found necessary to gut and then restructure a large Manhattan theater—guaranteed both endless delays and eventual financial failure. Weill's score has almost totally disappeared, along with the hopes of everyone involved.

His next major project was an anti-war musical, with a text by the mildly left-wing writer Paul Green. *Johnny Johnson*, which was revived and recorded in the 1950's by an excellent cast, seems now merely puerile in its sentimental pacifism, looking backward as it does to World War I rather than to the looming menace of Hitler. Artistically the effect is one of an incongruous linkage between a music which still retains European elements and a libretto exuding the comfortable certainties of American provincialism.

Everything changed for Weill, however, with his first real American success, *Knickerbocker Holiday*, written in 1938 to an anti-fascist (but also anti-Roosevelt) book by Maxwell Anderson. Heard today, the show seems an unintentionally funny mixture of piety and oafish humor surrounding the wistful "September Song."

Success beckoned again in 1941, with Weill's score for *Lady in the Dark*, in which Moss Hart brought to Broadway the emergent cultural interest in psychoanalysis. No greater contrast to the showy social nihilism of Weill's Brecht years could have been found. The use of fantasy to enable a successful career woman to accept the reality of her life—and the implicit celebration of the American values of success and prosperity—are telling evidence both of the power of this country to absorb its immigrants and of Weill's essential adaptability to the winds of ideological change. Nothing now appears especially memorable about Weill's

* In this connection it is significant for Brecht's commitment to his position and for Weill's commitment to Brecht that they both decided to withdraw *Der Jasager* from the *Neue Musik Berlin 1930* festival because it had rejected *Die Massnahme*.

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music, and it seems a safe bet that the work was carried, on the stage, as it is on a surviving recording, by Gertrude Lawrence's brilliant performance in the title role.

Now that the war was on, Weill devoted much attention to the provision of entertainment for workers in defense plants. This project, perhaps not altogether happily named the "Lunch Time Follies," pleased him greatly, for it was an opportunity to reach a different and even less sophisticated audience than his Broadway successes allowed. He returned to Broadway, however, in 1943, with *One Touch of Venus*, to an S. J. Perelman story with lyrics by Ogden Nash. Once again the moral is one of acceptance: a man falls in love with a statue of Venus he has inadvertently summoned to life, but eventually settles willingly for her homey, real-life lookalike. As with his other American scores, most of what remains to be heard today is only the oily polish of Broadway, rather than any real musical or dramatic penetration.

Much less commercially successful was his 1945 musical, *The Firebrand of Florence*, a collaboration with Ira Gershwin; what little of the score has been recorded sounds like an artificial combination of would-be seriousness and uninspired patter. Two years later Weill attempted a full-fledged Broadway opera, *Street Scene*, adapted from Elmer Rice's 1929 play and supplied with lyrics by the Negro poet Langston Hughes. Rice was here expressing the disgust felt by intellectuals at the end of the 1920's as they viewed American life; Hughes's adaptation after World War II was backward-looking rather than pertinent to its moment and Weill's music played on this inherent character of dated sentimentality. What he wrote has been called by a historian of the American musical theater "thoughtful and appropriate," but it might more accurately be described as tear-jerking without being memorable.

Now Weill became involved in yet another school opera—but this one a world away from the *Jasager* of his Brechtian days with its heavy moral message and its essentially colorless, neutral music. In *Down in the Valley* (1948) Weill used Arnold Sundgaard's story—of a man who is to be hanged for killing the tormentor of his true love—as the basis for an American folk opera, employing actual folk songs as melodic material. The work has been widely performed in colleges and universities; it has served for many young people as their first introduction to opera. Unfortunately, the whole is again marked by musical thinness and the practiced exploitation of audience sympathy.

Weill's last completed work was the Broadway musical *Lost in the Stars* (1949), based on Alan Paton's then bestselling novel about racial oppression in South Africa, *Cry, the Beloved Country*. It was only fitting that Weill's American career, which had gotten off the ground with Maxwell Anderson in *Knickerbocker Holiday*, should have ended in collaboration with Anderson on this congenial subject, so presciently reflecting the rise of the color problem in the United States itself. Weill's music eschews any serious attempt at African folk realism, and, like all his Broadway efforts, now seems the very model of glossy, high-minded commercialism. He died on April 3, 1950, during the musical's moderately successful run.

FOR all the talk about Kurt Weill's contribution to our native musical style, his American career is difficult to take seriously in artistic terms. Four musicals, a Broadway opera, a host of projects large and small: all this has left behind only a few songs beloved by aficionados of the genre.

Some of this disappointing record is implicit in the nature of popular culture in general and the Broadway musical in particular. Because popular culture is fleeting and ephemeral, its specific manifestations are necessarily short-lived; the very intensity of success bears within itself the seeds of obsolescence and replacement. As for Broadway, it represents at best an uneasy marriage between musicians of generally serious background and the lure of show-business fame. Yet even among Broadway composers, it is hardly self-evident that Weill stands apart from his rivals, among whom may be counted (in ascending order of musical talent) Richard Rodgers, Leonard Bernstein, and—on the level of real if flawed genius—George Gershwin. Certainly nothing Weill wrote can compare musically with *Porgy and Bess*.

He was, it is true, remarkably malleable in his ability to echo national styles. Harold Clurman, for example, has written of Weill: "If he had landed among the Hottentots, he would have become the outstanding Hottentot composer of the Hottentot theater." Yet how far Weill was from penetrating the American psyche is obvious from comparing his *Down in the Valley* with such an authentic piece of Americana as Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe* (1956). Moore's melodies bear the stamp of the American past; his musical architecture seems particularly attuned to the place of the frontier in our history; most of all, his well-made music, though ultimately minor, gives an impression of depth and richness. In the final analysis, where Moore evokes America, Weill evokes Broadway.

THERE are, to be sure, important features common to Weill's American and European careers. Chief among these similarities is the use at important moments of easily comprehensible tunes made up of repeated fragments at once short and lush. The element of motoric excitement, which often seems in Weill rattle for rattle's sake, tended to diminish as he selected subjects more reflective of conventional pieties. He usually set words so that they could be clearly heard; much of this clarity was, however, a result of the sparseness of the musical texture surrounding them. And further easing the problems of performance, most of his music is comfortably singable by non-operatic vocalists.

Weill's reliance on relatively untrained singers is deeply related to the essential nature of his musical aims. The kinds of performers for whom he writes are more at home in the communication of words than in music *per se*; his wife and greatest interpreter, Lotte Lenya,

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has been a prime example of what his work needs to be most effective. But such performers are not really musicians; they are actors and entertainers who happen to sing. So it is hardly surprising to find that, for all of Weill's statements in the 1920's about the power of music and its properly independent role in opera, his work marks a retreat from the high ambition and accomplishment of the 19th century. For Wagner as for Beethoven, music was in practice as well as in theory a universal language with an all-inclusive vocabulary describing every human emotion, thought, and activity. In Weill, on the other hand, music was at its best restricted to heightening mood and feeling, to fixing a moment in the audience's mind, to being attractive even when what was happening on the stage was not.

Weill thus remains a composer of music for the theater rather than a composer of opera. The audience for which he wrote, after all, was not primarily a musical one. It was not interested in a permanent musical creation meant to be heard and reheard, but rather in a one-time theatrical experience. In Berlin his audience came from the cabaret; in America its home was the Great White Way.

This is why Weill was at his best where the theater to which his music was incidental was at its best —in the *Dreigroschenoper* and, to a lesser extent, *Mahagonny*. When Brecht was not at his best, as in *Happy End* and the *Sieben Todsünden*, Weill slipped from sentimentality into banality. And where Weill's collaborators were drawn from Broadway, there his music remained.

Just how little Weill's music stands on its own, how superficial and pallid it is when deprived of staging and words, becomes obvious from his own instrumental arrangement of the score for *The Threepenny Opera* (*Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*). And yet it would be a mistake to underestimate Weill's contribution to the *Dreigroschenoper* and *Mahagonny*. That contribution was to provide the open, unashamed emotion needed to make palatable and even cloak Brecht's cynicism and nihilism. Weill was the sugar coating on Brecht's bitter pill; it was he who sensed that in maudlin tunefulness lay the key to a successful attack on the bastions both of bourgeois respectability and of high culture.

By now, of course, we have been vaccinated a thousand times against Weill-Brecht and against Weill-Broadway. What once was shocking in the one and brightly new in the other is now merely pleasant and beguiling, melody and lyrics for a night on the town. Perhaps the most important meaning of the current interest in Weill, then, is that New York's two opera companies—one of them among the leading houses in the world—have chosen to cater so prominently to just such a taste.

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Books in Review

Political Economist

KNOWLEDGE AND DECISIONS. By THOMAS SOWELL. *Basic Books. 422 pp. $18.50.*

Reviewed by ROBERT NISBET

DURING the past decade Thomas Sowell, who is professor of economics at UCLA, has made evident through a considerable range of books and articles that he is one of our most penetrating social critics. His basic cast of mind is that of the economist, with a strong orientation toward the free market, but he writes authoritatively in areas more commonly thought of as provinces of the sociologist and political scientist. Political economy, in the sense current in Western writing down through the early part of this century, probably best describes the direction and substance of his interests.

If free choice as understood by the economist is Sowell's model or metaphor for the good society in all its spheres, he nevertheless cannot be accused of indifference to the consequences of free choice. And if those consequences may occasionally seem harsh, at least on the surface or in the short run, Sowell can supply us with an impressive diversity of instances of how much harsher in fact are the consequences of governmental repression of individual choice, most especially the repression that comes clothed in humanitarian rhetoric.

The book is divided into two broad parts: "Social Institutions" and "Trends and Issues." The first is analytical in character, often drawing upon highly sophisticated problems and paradigms which are essentially economic in character. We are taken through such thorny areas as the role of knowledge in society—the individual's personal knowledge, which is and must be pathetically small, and the organized, systematic knowledge by which government, economy, and society survive; the nature of decision-making at all levels; and, in three successive, engrossing chapters, the vast problem of the mechanisms or "trade-offs" by which the ambiguities and paradoxes of economic, political, and social life are somehow resolved.

Throughout this first part of the book it is the nature and application of knowledge that is in the forefront of the author's mind. "How does an ignorant world perform intricate functions requiring enormous knowledge?" Individually, Sowell observes, "we know so pathetically little, and yet socially we use a vast range and complexity of knowledge that would confound a computer." The same question is in effect asked by the author about the infinity of decisions that are made by human beings in their highly circumscribed personal lives and in the measureless public domain in which these lives take place. We are dealing here with questions which first became imperious in the 18th century and were faced by such diverse writers as Mandeville, Hutcheson, and, most impressively in the long run, Adam Smith. But the age of the questions does not in the least diminish their evocative power. With different assumptions perhaps, and certainly with new and different techniques, we still wrestle with the central problem of 18th-century moral philosophy: how do individuals with their innate passions form a collective order that meets the criteria of justice, productivity, and legitimacy—and above all of sheer survival?

Thomas Sowell's answer, or principal answer at least, lies in the huge realm of what he calls trade-offs. The innumerable trade-offs each day in the marketplace are the most obvious examples of the mechanism that for Sowell is crucial to our society. But, as he makes evident in rich detail, there are just as many such exchanges in the political and social spheres:

> Social decision-making processes, whether formal or informal, face the same basic problem of seeking to maximize well-being subject to some inherent restraint—whether of time, wisdom, or economic resources. . . . Social values are in general incrementally variable: neither safety, diversity, rational articulation, nor morality is categorically a "good thing" to have more of, without limits. All are subject to diminishing returns, and ultimately negative returns.

The same principle of pragmatic trade-offs extends to the political sphere. "One of the most important trade-offs is between the amount of freedom and the amount of other characteristics desired in a society." Necessary as freedom is to a creative and progressive culture, it is far from the only requisite. For freedom to flourish, there must be a prior social contract of order and justice, as Adam Smith fully recognized when he wrote his classic testament to "natural liberty." Sowell trenchantly observes:

> Totalitarian governments, by definition, have no significant trade-offs of freedom left to consider, since freedom has already been sacrificed for some alternative consideration, whether rhetorical or actual. Democratic governments are constantly weighing incremental trade-offs toward or away from freedom. Indeed democracy itself is a consideration that is traded against freedom, and at one time this trade-off was both recognized and feared.

Needless to say, Sowell distinguishes trade-offs respecting freedom in a democracy from the Newspeak corruption according to which non-freedom (however necessary it may be in fact) is described in Rousseauian fashion as but a higher form of freedom.

What Sowell sees around him is a vast network of *systems*, ranging from those involved in organic evolution all the way to the economy

ROBERT NISBET, *currently resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of many books, including* The Sociological Tradition, Social Change and History, *and, most recently,* History of the Idea of Progress.

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At 13, he was a prisoner at Auschwitz. At 32, he was an advisor to Presidents. Now Samuel Pisar has written "one of the significant memoirs of our time."*

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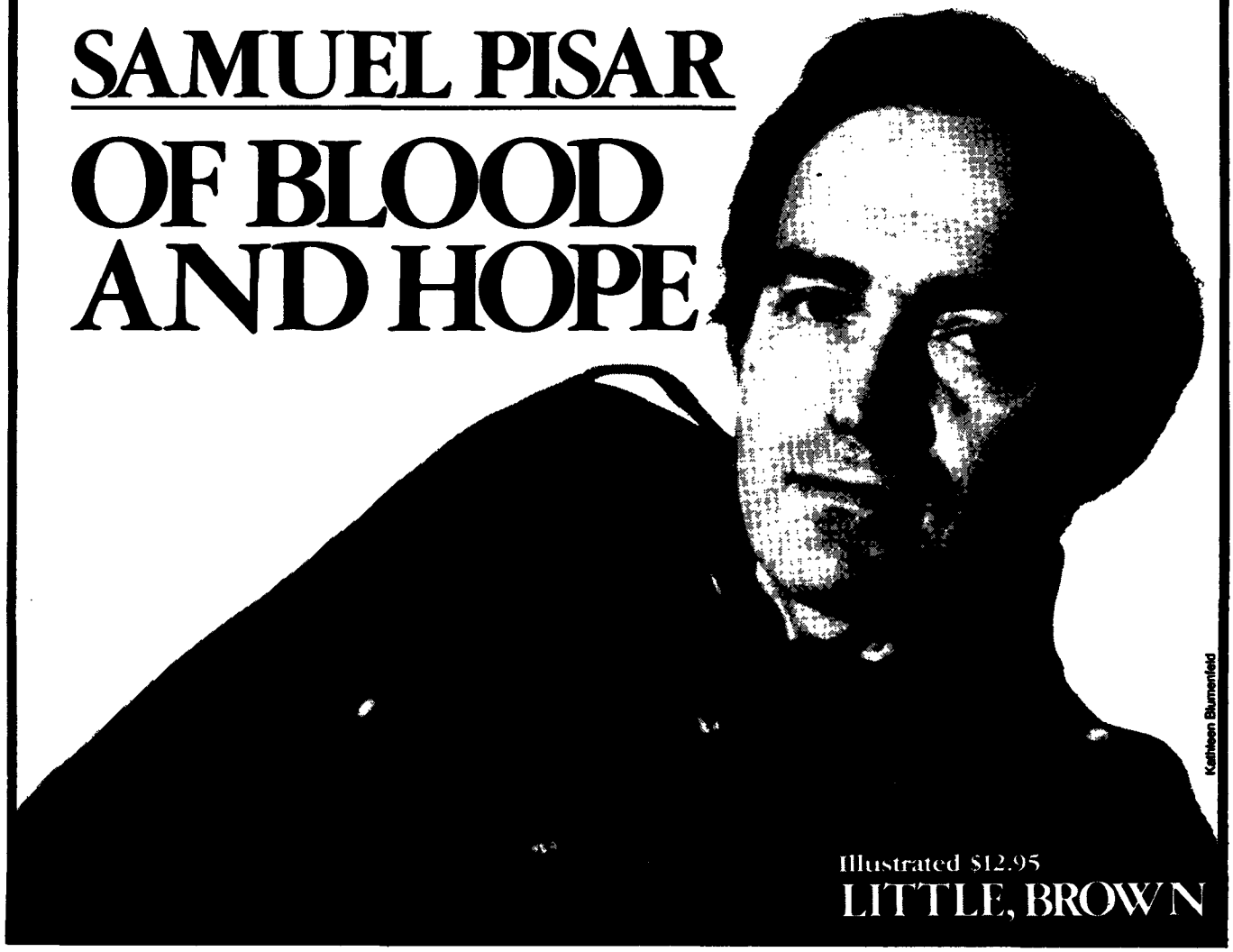
SAMUEL PISAR

OF BLOOD AND HOPE



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and the polity. Only, he argues, by looking at the economic, social, and political orders as systems in which results are achieved independently of, and very often in stark contrast to, the motives and stores of knowledge of the participating individuals, can we understand the real role of knowledge in society.

The systemic approach, Sowell notes, is the methodology of both Adam Smith and Karl Marx:

> In Smith's classic, . . . laissez-faire capitalism was advocated—as a system—because of (beneficial) systemic characteristics which were "no part" of the "intention" of capitalists, whom Smith excoriated. . . . By the same token Karl Marx's *Capital* condemned capitalism for (detrimental) systemic characteristics which Marx refused to attribute to the individual moral feelings of the capitalist.

Adopting a systemic view of the institutions which make up society does not, Sowell suggests, entirely exclude the individual factor. Saints, prophets, geniuses, and villains do exist, and leave their individual impacts upon the public mind. Still, close awareness of reigning values in the systems around us is useful for predicting the probable areas or spheres within which geniuses and villains make their appearance.

THE second part of Sowell's book is essentially historical, and is designed to show in temporal flow some of the analytic elements examined in the first part. Decision-making remains the author's primary concern, but in this part of the book it is dealt with in the light of historical trends in three major areas: economy, law, and politics. One cannot praise too highly the combination of perspective, insight, and detailed learning found in these three chapters.

If there is a single tendency that Sowell finds common to the recent history of economy, law, and politics, it is this:

> Even within democratic nations, the locus of decision-making has drifted away from the individual, the family, and voluntary associations of various sorts, and toward government. And within government, it has moved away from elected officials subject to voter feedback and toward more insulated governmental institutions, such as bureaucracies and the appointed judiciary. These trends have grave implications, not only for individual freedom, but also for the social ways in which knowledge is used, distorted, or made ineffective.

It will come as no surprise to those already familiar with Thomas Sowell's work that among the matters brilliantly dealt with under "trends in law" are affirmative action and, in general, the devolution of policies meant to remove discriminatory barriers between the races into policies meant to coerce them into some predetermined and inevitably false relation of "equality." I know of no one who has exposed in more authoritative, coruscating fashion the whole succession of non sequiturs, judicial invasions, and administrative tyrannies that may be seen following the historic *Brown* decision of 1954. The very sociological basis of the Supreme Court's decision—that segregated schools lead necessarily to inferior education—is challenged by Sowell:

> Within walking distance of the Supreme Court was an all-black high school whose eighty-year history prior to *Brown* denies the principle. As far back as 1899, it had higher test scores than any of the white schools in Washington, and its average IQ was eleven points above the national average in 1939—fifteen years before the Supreme Court declared such things impossible. There have been other such black schools elsewhere, and indeed NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall in the *Brown* case was a graduate of such a school in Baltimore. The history of all-Oriental and all-Jewish schools would reduce this ponderous finding to a laughingstock, instead of the revered "law of the land."

There are other examples, no less stark, that Sowell gives us of the ravages of morality and convention—and of sheer rationality—which have been the consequences of judicial activism during the past few decades. Among them is the pathetic state we have been brought to with respect to capital punishment. "It would be inexcusable even to shoot a mad dog if we knew how to catch him readily and safely, and cure him instantly." But we do not. Nor do we know how to "rehabilitate" the individual who over a period of years sodomized, killed, and buried beneath his house several dozen boys and young men. Are we in fact playing God, Sowell asks, when we act to protect society from habitual or systematic murderers through the use of the death penalty? "We do not play God when we act—as we must—within our limitations. We play God when we pretend to an omniscience and a range of options we do not in fact possess."

SOWELL'S chapter on "Trends in Politics" is at the same high level of scholarship and insight as the chapters on law and economics. He makes us see in admirable clarity the sheer necessity of a system of constitutional division of powers in America, given the Framers' understanding of the institutional basis of liberty. Yet over the years, as is only too painfully obvious, the constitutional divison has been destroyed or eroded. Sowell points out that while preservation of the division was in the care and responsibility of the Supreme Court, that Court from the beginning had a vested interest in the concentration of power in the federal government and of course also in the extension of judicial power into legislative and executive areas. How else could we have wound up during the past decade with a federal judge in Boston serving as de-facto superintendent of schools? Can one easily imagine Congress or even the President, through a series of discrete and explicit mandates, requiring under penalty of fine and imprisonment cities threatened by bankruptcy to enter such areas as the busing of pupils to their schools, and in calculated indifference to the astronomical costs? But what might daunt even a Caligula does not, on the gathering evidence, so much as interrupt the repose of the federal judiciary.

Sowell returns frequently in the

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historical sections to the key role of knowledge and of decision-making, a focus that yields fresh or at least uncommon perspectives even on such by now well-worn issues as equality/inequality. The passions and convictions of intelligence-testers in the early part of this century may appear opposite to the devotions and dogmas of current egalitarians. But there is, Sowell maintains, an overriding likeness between the two groups, one that reflects a dogmatic certainty about race and ethnicity coupled with a boundless willingness to use the powers of the political state in support of that certainty. Some of the early prophets of IQ saw the results of their tests—which, they said, proved the existence of innate and ineradicable differences of mentality springing from race alone—in the same light physicists did the laws of motion. It was an easy step for these true believers to become impassioned advocates of laws which would bar entry into the United States of the "mentally inferior peoples" from Eastern Europe and Asia and would, within the country, segregate the innately superior from the inferior in school, occupation, and, above all, marriage. Such views, as Sowell notes, were not those of village racists but of "top contemporary authorities in the field, based on masses of statistical data, and virtually unchallenged either intellectually, morally, or politically within the profession at the time."

But, Sowell argues, professional dogmas of hereditary inequality which held the field during the first decades of the century are fully matched today by "equally dogmatic conclusions about scientific proof of racial equality," conclusions which began to flourish nationally in the 1940's and 1950's. Whatever may be the eventual resolution of the wildly conflicting claims—if indeed such a resolution is even possible in so dogma- and ideology-ridden a matter—the inescapable fact is that the egalitarianism of today is buoyed up by forces of passion and bigotry that are precisely the equal of those which supported the IQ eugenists of an earlier day. Egalitarians in our time are quite as willing to use political coercion, to base tactics on contumely, vilification, and even violence, and to allow one value to dislodge or destroy other values as ever were the Nordicist or Anglo-Saxonist true believers of 1920.

BOTH phases of the innate-intelligence controversy, Sowell declares, "illustrate a more general characteristic of socially and politically 'relevant' intellectual activity—an unwillingness or inability to say, 'We don't know,' or even to admit that conclusions are tentative." And that general characteristic, he further concludes, is part and parcel of what he calls "The Intellectual Vision." Where that vision exists—as it did in the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and then again, powerfully and transformingly, in the societies of Lenin and Hitler and today in China and a host of Third World countries—the clear danger also exists that dogma will trample mere

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A former editor of *The Nation* and professor at Harvard, Williams College, and Brandeis University, Max Lerner is the author of more than sixteen books, including the bestselling *America as a Civilization*. He writes a syndicated column that appears regularly in newspapers throughout the United States.

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conclusion or fact and that a rush to capture absolute power will occur of the same kind that took place in Paris commencing about 1790 and in Russia in late 1917.

But it is one of the strengths of Thomas Sowell that he does not put the economic, social, and political trends *he* perceives under any rubric of historical necessity, in any rhetorical guise of a wave of the future. A brilliant and profoundly knowledgeable social scientist, he is willing to leave waves of any kind to the quacks and to those whom Burckhardt called the *terribles simplificateurs*. He prefers the company of those who want only "the right of ordinary people to find elbow room for themselves and a refuge from the rampaging presumptions of their 'betters.'"

"Anti-Zionism"

THE LEFT AGAINST ZION. Edited by ROBERT S. WISTRICH. *Vallentine Mitchell/Biblio Distribution. 309 pp. $19.50.*

Reviewed by ERIC M. BREINDEL

FEW who have watched it unfold can have failed to note that the international propaganda campaign against the Zionist movement and the state of Israel, which reached a preliminary crescendo in 1975 with the UN General Assembly's Zionism/Racism resolution, has long been couched in Marxist rhetoric. When Israel is referred to as an "outpost of Western imperialism," or as a "colonial settler-state," the terminology is not that of Saudi and Kuwaiti sheiks, notwithstanding the fact that these help finance the propaganda onslaught. Though rehearsed with vigor by Third World autocrats of "nonaligned" persuasion, the multi-count indictment of Israel originates in the political and intellectual world of Soviet Communism, with flourishes added by independent Marxists and New Left ideologues in the West. (A recent UN resolution condemning Israeli "hegemonism" suggests some Chinese input as well.) The Arabs have reasons of their own for being hostile to Israel, but the fact remains that this hostility has found expression in an imported language.

Several points about the campaign are worth noting. In the first place, it is highly effective; indeed it seems to confirm the validity of the Big Lie thesis. However absurd it may strike those who know the facts, the supposed existence of a "Tel Aviv-Pretoria Axis" has become an internationally accepted truth about world politics. (This particular charge, with its use of the historically loaded term "Axis," is instantly recognizable as a Soviet insertion into the Arab-Third World political lexicon.) The slander is presently repeated without hesitation by non-Marxist liberals and leftists, in America and in Western Europe, some of whom are not even opponents of Israel.

The campaign is also deceptive in that it tends to focus on specific issues, such as Israel's conduct in the occupied territories (or Israel's links with South Africa); thus it appears to be a relatively recent phenomenon, sparked by supposed Israeli misdeeds. Yet, although the propaganda war certainly picked up momentum after the 1967 war, its ideological roots can be traced to the last century, and its purpose is nothing less than to undermine Israel's legitimacy as a state.

A final macabre curiosity about the campaign is that constant repetition and exaggeration of Soviet-inspired myths about Zionism have allowed for a fusion between the Marxist critique of Jewish nationalism and the Nazi notion of an all-powerful "international Jewish conspiracy." Thus, a retrograde religious fanatic like the Ayatollah Khomeini can comfortably espouse the view that Israel is a mere lackey of American imperialism, while charging simultaneously that the *Jews* in Europe and America organized the (Saudi) assault on the Grand Mosque at Mecca last year.

THIS book searches out the historical roots of the current propaganda compaign and offers new insight into the important question of the USSR's attitude toward Israel's existence. Robert S. Wistrich, a young British scholar who has written a book on the Jewish question in Marxist thought, has here collected essays which analyze the theoretical underpinnings of Marxist/Communist hostility to Zionism and explore the lore of Communist, New Left, and Palestinian anti-Israel propaganda. Specific attention is paid to the manifestly spurious distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, one which the propagandists themselves profess to take pains to observe. Included also are case studies in Israel's relations with the Communist world.

Wistrich has arranged the book chronologically. His own essay, "Marxism and Jewish Nationalism: The Theoretical Roots of Confrontation," reviews the fundamental themes. Marx, Otto Bauer, and their successors, Mensheviks and Bolsheviks alike, refused to recognize the Jews as a particular national entity. Even when Marxists came around to acknowledging the validity of the "national question," the Jews were still regarded as a decadent religious sect, drawn together by an archaic creed. Thus, in 1897, the year of the first Zionist Congress, *Die Neue Zeit* described Zionism as the "last beautiful pose of a 'moribund nation' before it left the stage of history." (For a contemporary articulation of this view, one need not go to the PLO or to the Communist world. Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky's recent assertion that "there is no Jewish people" reflects an identification with his intellectual forebears, the early Austrian Socialists.)

The adamant refusal of doctrinaire Marxists to modify their insistence that any notion of Jewish nationality was chimerical is illustrated by Lenin's blistering critique of the anti-Zionist Jewish Bund. Lenin did suggest, in 1913, that assimilation not be forced. Yiddish schools and other Jewish cultural institutions were allowed to exist in the USSR during the 1920's and 1930's; but Stalin, as indicated by *his* 1913 tract, "Marxism and the National and Colonial Question," was even more anxious than Lenin to see the Jews hurry up and disappear.

In this interim, despite the beginning of mass settlement in Pales-

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tine and the enormous growth of the Bund and various Zionist organizations in independent Poland, the Communist position on Jewish nationalism remained constant. Nor did the political ascendancy of the Labor Zionists in the world Zionist movement, many of whom were Marxists and a substantial number of whom were pro-Soviet, shake the party line. Neither did the success of the kibbutz experiment in Palestine, the political and ideological roots of which are discussed here in an excellent essay by Ya'acov Hurvitz.

The Communist position on Zionist efforts to reclaim Palestine started to shift during World War II. Between 1944 and 1946, Soviet authorities actively assisted Haganah officers in organizing the flight of the surviving remnant of European Jewry to Palestine, in defiance of British immigration restrictions. Finally, in 1947, the new line emerged. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko told the United Nations that his government was well-disposed toward the idea of partition in Palestine. The following year, the USSR became the first country to extend *de jure* recognition to the new state of Israel.

As Peter Brod emphasizes here, in his discussion of the first eight years of Soviet-Israeli relations, the USSR's primary motive in changing its position on Zionism was strategic. The Soviets could not ignore the reality of the postwar confrontation between Great Britain and Palestine Jewry. As illegal immigration was complemented by armed resistance, it became increasingly clear that the Jews of Palestine were certain to be the first in the Middle East to pierce Great Britain's imperial armor. Thus Stalin's interest in undermining British dominance in an oil-rich and strategically crucial region dictated an interim alliance with Zionism.

By its very nature the Zionist-Soviet alliance was bound to be short-lived. Its demise was accelerated by the fact that the Soviet Union never fully reversed its stance on Zionism. Palestine was treated in isolation from the larger Jewish question. Moscow was ready to concede the immutability of anti-Semitism under capitalism, and, in light of the Holocaust, to profess sympathy with the urgent Zionist demand for a Jewish state. But Jewish nationalism, however justifiable in the West, was held to be irrelevant to the secure and satisfied Jews of the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc—all, needless to say, basking in the sunshine of socialism. Thus, no Jewish immigration from the USSR to Palestine was to be permitted.

As Brod points out, Israel, by its very existence, was bound to threaten Stalin's sense of domestic tranquility. And nothing Israel might have done could have averted the black years of Soviet Jewry or the tidal wave of anti-Semitism, thinly disguised as anti-Zionism, which soon swept Eastern Europe. While the Jewish intelligentsia—"rootless cosmopolitans" and "bourgeois nationalists" alike—became

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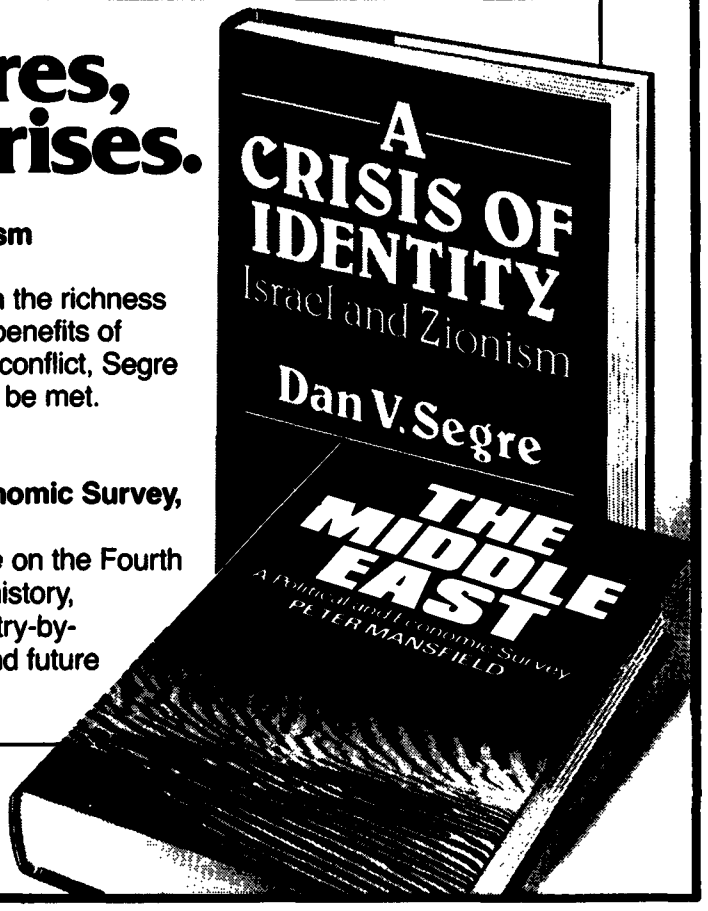

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Stalin's scapegoat for Titoism, popular anti-Semitism was fanned in Eastern Europe to serve its traditional diversionary function during a period of economic adversity and Marshall Plan temptation. In addition, the aging and rather mad dictator's paranoid fantasies about an international conspiracy against his regime, co-directed, apparently, by Marshal Tito, Noel Field, and the Joint Distribution Committee, should not be discounted. The postwar purges, as a whole, have yet to be fully explained. What is clear is that their anti-Semitic character evolved largely independently of Israeli foreign policy and Soviet-Israel relations.

One aspect of the purge period is scrutinized in this volume in a splendid essay by Arnold Krammer, a student of the early ties between Israel and the USSR. Krammer focuses on the 1952 Slansky trial in Czechoslovakia, the most overtly anti-Semitic of the Soviet bloc show trials. Rudolf Slansky, the Jewish secretary-general of the Czechoslovak Communist party, and thirteen colleagues, ten of them Jews, were forced to confess to being part of a "Trotskyite-Titoist-Zionist" espionage ring. The accused, all previously high-ranking party and state officials, were taunted as Jews and compelled, among other things, to confirm the authenticity of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Most of the accused were sent to the gallows. During the 1968 Dubcek thaw, evidence emerged in Prague indicating that the anti-Semitic flavor of the proceedings was introduced on direct instructions from Moscow.

THE contradiction between foreign and domestic policy in the USSR's line on Zionism began to resolve itself in the early 1950's. Shrill anti-Israel polemics appeared in the Communist press with increasing regularity, despite Ben-Gurion's tortured effort to keep Israel neutral in the cold war. The major shift came in 1954-55, when the Soviet Union began to find a common language with Nasser's revolutionary government in Egypt. By September 1955, Czechoslovakia was serving as a conduit for Soviet arms to Egypt, just as it had for equipment to Israel seven years earlier. Moscow's hostility to Israel became a fact, as Soviet-Arab relations blossomed. The tie with Israel had served its purpose. From the Soviet perspective, the Arab world was now the land of opportunity.

Anti-Israel agitation on the part of Soviet diplomats, and in the Soviet press, reached a new height during the period immediately preceding the Six-Day War. Diplomatic relations between Israel and the USSR were broken off during the war and have not been resumed.

The seething hostility of the Soviet press in May 1967, as Nasser and his allies massed their forces and the Gulf of Aqaba was closed, was exceeded in its vitriol only by the pathological tirades against Israel in the East German media. Both responses are examined here in separate essays. Also in this volume, Adam Ciolkosz offers a discussion of the 1968 anti-Zionist campaign in Poland which led to the exodus of the last of Poland's Jews, and W. Oschilies analyzes the anti-Semitic wave, reminiscent of the Slansky period, which swept Czechoslovakia shortly after the 1968 Soviet invasion. Each essay is a case study in the phenomenon of anti-Semitism without Jews. Other topics explored here are New Left anti-Zionism, the post-1967 revival of classical anti-Semitism in the USSR, and the attitudes toward Israel of the French and Italian Communist parties.

THE concluding essay, also by Wistrich, leaves a troublesome question open. Does the Soviet Union's relatively recent alliance with the PLO mark an abandonment of the position that Israel, within certain limited boundaries, has a right to exist? Moscow has, from time to time, repeated its commitment to Israel's sovereign integrity, albeit less frequently and with less enthusiasm than before its ties with the PLO were established.

The question of Israel's existence (not one, incidentally, which plagued the New Left—the destruction of Israel tended to be an explicit goal of every faction) is, from the Soviet standpoint, a foreign-policy matter. Thus Moscow's eventual position on the issue will accord with the Soviet Union's perceived strategic interests. Israel *may* continue to be seen as serving a useful function, a point of coalescence for Arab radicals, revolutionary Islamic fundamentalists, and conservative oil sheiks. The existence of Israel promotes anti-Americanism in the Arab world, necessitates some Arab reliance on the Soviet Union, and helps postpone the day of reckoning between a resurgent Islam and an empire ruled from Moscow containing 30 million Muslims.

But if a strategic assessment indicates a Soviet interest in keeping Israel alive, recent history suggests that this is, at best, a passive interest. Anti-Semitism at home began to intensify after the Six-Day War. Fueled by the renaissance of Zionism among Russian Jews, and by political pressure on their behalf generated abroad, Soviet anti-Semitism has risen to a feverish pitch. While immigration statistics demonstrate Moscow's responsiveness to external pressure, the predicament of those who remain behind grows increasingly more precarious.

The convenient harmony of harsh domestic anti-Semitism and a vituperatively anti-Israel foreign policy has, of course, allowed for a merging of the two causes under the banner of "anti-Zionism." Contemporary Soviet propaganda finds Zionism at the root of every unrelated evil. The Zionists are represented as ideological heirs to Hitler. History is rewritten to depict even the Holocaust as essentially a joint Nazi-Zionist endeavor.

The assault on Israel's legitimacy might conceivably be moderated, if circumstances suggested both that Israel's very existence was in danger and that Moscow still stood to benefit from keeping the Jewish state around. But as this book shows, anti-Zionism has been a Communist ideological constant, mitigated only once in extraordinary circumstances. The present campaign is such that it may itself generate a rethinking of Soviet policy on the bottom-line question of Israel's existence. Or it may be that current propaganda reflects a reevaluation that has already taken place.

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Distorting History

CONSCIENCE AND CONVENIENCE: THE ASYLUM AND ITS ALTERNATIVES IN PROGRESSIVE AMERICA. By DAVID J. ROTHMAN. *Little, Brown. 464 pp. $17.50.*

Reviewed by GERALD N. GROB

IN RECENT decades two approaches have dominated the writing of American history. On one side are those who maintain—to use Herbert Butterfield's words—that genuine historical understanding "is not achieved by the subordination of the past to the present, but rather by our making the past our present and attempting to see life with the eyes of another century than our own." On the other side stand those who insist that the object of history is to illuminate the present and derive lessons from the past that will serve as a guide to the future.

Nowhere is the second approach better illustrated than in the work of David J. Rothman, a professor of history at Columbia University. For more than a decade he has been exploring in a provocative manner the ways in which American society has dealt with deviancy and dependency. His first book on this subject, *The Discovery of the Asylum* (1971), sought to describe the origins and early development of the asylum. *Conscience and Convenience* extends that analysis from the 1880's to World War II. To a remarkable degree this book mirrors the concerns and attitudes of the present. Indeed, its goal is to explain the "failures" in criminal justice and the treatment of mental disabilities in the hope of creating more effective and humane alternatives in the future.

At the end of the 19th century, according to Rothman, American prisons and asylums had become an embarrassment; brutality and corruption were endemic. Faced with

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institutional failure, "progressives" set out to design new policies to deal with the criminal, the delinquent, and the mentally ill. Unlike their Jacksonian predecessors, progressives did not believe that all deviants were of a single type that could be rehabilitated by the well-ordered routine of the asylum. Influenced by the emerging social sciences, they located the roots of deviant behavior in the individual's particular environment or unique "mind-set" and psychology. From this analysis came the belief that, as no two individuals were precisely alike, every case had to be treated differently; a set of inflexible rules applicable to all deviants was inappropriate. Progressive programs were based on discretionary responses to each case, an approach that greatly enlarged the authority of the state and the freedom of public officials to act toward deviants in whatever manner they deemed appropriate.

Progressive ideology led unerringly in a particular direction. Criminal justice was individualized; officials had discretionary authority to choose among probation, parole, and an indeterminate sentence. In a like manner, juvenile justice was revolutionized by the invention of the juvenile court, a court bound neither by rules nor precedent. Finally, the care of the mentally ill was also individualized with psychiatrists given a choice among outpatient care, short-term intensive treatment in psychopathic hospitals, and long-term care in more traditional mental hospitals.

The result of these innovations, according to Rothman, was an unmitigated disaster. Hoping to transform the institutional legacy of their Jacksonian predecessors, progressives did "less to upgrade dismal conditions than they did to create nightmares of their own," nightmares that continue to plague our own generation. Conscience (i.e., rehabilitation) and convenience (i.e., custody) were fundamentally incompatible; in the end the latter easily won out. Institutions continued to dominate the system, and innovations simply became add-ons to the structure rather than replacements. Parole and the indeterminate sentence became mechanisms of control within prisons. Juvenile justice was undermined by class bias; ultimately the juvenile court became a referral agency to reformatories where officials were preoccupied with the maintenance of internal order. Psychiatric care continued to be dominated by large custodial asylums.

To Rothman the moral is clear: discretionary power of public officials cannot be trusted, and a system of incarceration "seems incapable of maintaining decency throughout *all* its sectors."

BEFORE we consider this work as a guide to the present, we must judge its quality as history. The fact of the matter is that *Conscience and Convenience* does not represent good history. Unfortunately, Rothman has bent, misinterpreted, or ignored many facts in order to shape his mosaic, and the facts simply will not cooperate. A few examples will suffice.

In Rothman's eyes, all events are clear-cut; there is no room for ambiguity or diversity. Thus the book opens with the claim that "every observer" of late 19th-century prisons and asylums recognized that the pride of one generation had become the shame of another. To the contrary, there were observers, including former inmates, who held favorable views of such institutions. Likewise, Rothman assumes that all institutions were similar in character: thus he speaks of *the* mental hospital, *the* prison, *the* reformatory. Yet the very number of such institutions should raise doubts about sweeping generalizations; there were substantial variations within individual groups. When in 1940 Kentucky spent $147 per year for maintaining each patient in its mental hospitals and Wisconsin spent $501, the differences in the quality of care must have been striking. We do not today assume that the quality of education is even remotely similar across the two thousand-odd American colleges and universities; there is no reason to make such an assumption about other kinds of institutions.

More importantly, Rothman all but ignores the nature and significance of institutional populations. Clients on his reading are totally passive, their fates determined by administrators concerned with institutional stability and bent on defeating any efforts at rehabilitation. This thesis is simply untenable in view of the nature of the patient population of mental hospitals in the period under review. By the early 1920's more than 20 per cent of patients were over sixty years of age; this figure climbed dramatically in succeeding decades as the proportion of the aged rose in the general population. Most patients, in other words, were there because of senility. Another fifth of all male first admissions were cases of general paresis (the tertiary stage of syphilis, which involves behavioral and neurological deterioration, paralysis, and death). It is hardly surprising that mental hospitals provided custodial rather than primarily therapeutic care for such groups. Equally significant, commitments of such persons were initiated mostly by the family (or public officials when the individual had no relatives). The custodial function of mental hospitals was hence not due to any conflict between the needs of managers and patients; before 1940, the hospital served in part as the old-age home of its era.

Where not wrong, Rothman is often unclear. He constantly alludes to the "progressives," but rarely identifies them with any degree of specificity. His discussion of their environmentalist ideology is unpersuasive because he ignores all contrary evidence. For example, a substantial number of progressives accepted a genetic basis for human behavior. Their efforts contributed to the passage of laws in nearly thirty states providing for the involuntary sterilization of defectives, including criminals, feeble-minded persons, and the mentally ill; between 1907 and 1940 nearly 36,000 persons were sterilized. Progressive thinking, in other words, was neither as simple nor as coherent as Rothman makes it out to be, but ambiguous on many social issues.

Rothman's scholarship is impressive; he has examined many primary sources. Yet the book is flawed because of inadequate and incomplete research. Rothman

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mentions William Alanson White's role in penology, but seems never to have consulted the large and revealing collection of White papers at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Rothman's discussion of the early history of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene is superficial and, as a result, misleading, based as it is on a reading of a few printed documents rather than the large manuscript collection of this organization's records located in New York. The description of restraint in mental hospitals ignores data from the census of 1880 which do not precisely support some of Rothman's conclusions. And his emphasis on the numerical overrepresentation of immigrant populations in institutions fails to take account of corrections based on the age distribution of the total native and total immigrant populations (the figures appear in the census of 1910)—corrections that narrow the differential sharply. Similar deficiencies and omissions appear throughout Rothman's work.

Finally, Rothman does not establish what he claims. Institutional failure is asserted rather than proved. At no point does he offer evidence to support his contention that non-institutional solutions (whatever their nature) were more effective than institutional ones. More importantly, Rothman's claim that custody and rehabilitation are incompatible leaves us nowhere. If the two cannot coexist, what are the alternatives? Non-institutional custody for criminals or persons incapable of caring for themselves is a contradiction in terms. Indeed, the very title and subtitle of the book are misleading in this respect, since no alternatives are ever discussed.

By imposing upon the past a conceptual framework drawn from the present, Rothman has blurred significant differences between the two eras in an apparent effort to berate the present and shape the future. But *Conscience and Convenience* does not represent historical scholarship of a high order, and for that reason offers little or no guidance to a better future. A perfect example of research dictated by personal convictions, it is poor history and a flawed basis for policy.

Trash Theory

STRANDED: ROCK AND ROLL FOR A DESERT ISLAND. Edited by GREIL MARCUS. *Knopf. 305 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT RICHMAN

POPULAR music in America now outgrosses the combined revenue of movies, theater, opera, ballet, and sport. The recording industry produces 1,000 new songs each week, the sole purpose being for a few to become hits and make money. It is a staggeringly competitive business, for the profits are staggeringly high: in 1979, sales of LP and single records totaled $2.5 billion. With sales of taped cartridges of record albums added to this figure, total revenues approach $3.25 billion.

Apart from rejuvenating the entertainment industry, rock has spawned a variety of auxiliary industries and professions that are all set in motion, like the many cogs in a wheel, when companies undertake to produce and market a record. Among them are publicists, promoters, agents, engineers, and technicians, not to mention the musicians, arrangers, and songwriters. One would be hard put to select the one or two individuals centrally responsible for a given record's success; all the people involved seem to be vital components of the complex and tightly organized business of making a hit.

"Rock criticism" is another ancillary endeavor of the pop music industry, but it has a unique and curious relation to that industry. Started about fifteen years ago in publications like *Rolling Stone* and the *Village Voice*, it distinguished itself from its more gossipy counterpart found in the standard rock press ("fan") magazines by claims to seriousness, literacy, and a high degree of perception and judg-

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NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI, *THE PRINCE*

Translation, Introduction, Notes, by Leo Paul S. de Alvarez

This translation of *The Prince* has been said to be distinctive because, of all the translations available, it is the most accurate. It has also been described as "careful, unusual, and challenging," permitting the reader himself to appreciate the manner and substance of Machiavelli's argument. 168 pp. Paperbound only.

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS AND AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONALISM

Essays by Laurence Berns, Eva Brann, Glen E. Thurow, George Anastaplo, Leo Paul S. de Alvarez

The Gettysburg Address has long been regarded as the most compact and lyrical expression of the American political religion. The essays in this book attempt to understand the nature and workings of that political religion. Unlike most previous works on the Gettysburg Address, an attempt is made to study the speech from the standpoint of the political thought which it presupposes. 203 pp. Paperbound only.

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ment. Indeed, rock criticism not only sees itself as existing altogether outside the commercial establishment of rock, it even sees rock as essentially something other than a product of the entertainment industry. In writing about a record, a rock critic will attempt to evaluate it through an interpretation and analysis of, among other things, its musical influences, the personal or political sentiments expressed in the lyrics, its production techniques, and the persona of the "artist." The critic often finds an integrated "meaning" in rock and roll devised by the supremely self-conscious imagination of the rocker and having a far-ranging aesthetic, political, or cultural significance.

Stranded consists of twenty essays of rock criticism by its leading practitioners, each of whom was asked by the editor, Greil Marcus, to discourse on the one record he would take to a desert island. Because rock criticism has never developed a standardized format or language, the book exhibits a variety of approaches. John Rockwell of the New York *Times*, for example, writes a piece of passionate advocacy for Linda Rondstadt, based for the most part on his intimacy with that singer. M. Mark, arts editor of the *Village Voice*, compares an album by Van Morrison with the poetry of Yeats. Ariel Swartley, a rock critic from Boston, discusses the "deliberate insularity" of Bruce Springsteen. Grace Lichtenstein, another *Village Voice* writer, interprets her favorite record wholly in reference to her own "personal associations." Tom Smucker takes a historical slant, condemning the "rip-off" of black gospel singers by white performers, while Simon Frith, a sociologist from the University of Warwick in England, analyzes a record by the Rolling Stones in terms of class conflict. One contributor, Dave Marsh, makes up a fantasy album consisting entirely of songs about masturbation.

Wherever they start, however, and wherever they end up, all these critics subject their "artists" to blisteringly high scrutiny. They focus on every tiny and apparently inconsequential detail of music, lyric, and persona, discovering in each case an extraordinarily high level of self-consciousness and intentionality. Examples may be found on nearly any page in *Stranded*. Writing about a particularly inept group called the New York Dolls, Robert Christgau remarks that one guitar player's "mistakes are indistinguishable from his inspirations. Each of his solos and comments and background noises on these albums is a point in an infinite series of magically marginal differentiations." Another guitarist "exploited . . . a continuous, imprecise finger action," thus creating "a primordial totality . . . of electric noise," to which he nevertheless "gave shape and idiosyncrasy and a sense of humor." The bass player "aimed for self-transcendence" with "a passionate inaccuracy . . . his ordinariness . . . provided a modicum of conceptual stability." And the bungling drummer, according to Christgau, "played with obliging modernist steadiness."

One would never know from reading Christgau and his fellow contributors that the commercial product they are seeking to explain, which at its best can be powerfully affecting, is also consistently unoriginal and simple-minded, being constructed from a limited but seemingly forever renewable group of melodies, riffs, and techniques stolen from older rock, blues, jazz, even classical compositions. Rock usually fails to rejuvenate the materials it borrows, and even when it is very good it fails to create anything significantly larger than the sum of its borrowed parts. Indeed it is questionable whether a greater degree of experimentation and diversity would actually make for more interesting rock, since real rock and roll (the kind that does not attempt to move beyond the conventions of the form) properly defeats the impulse to complexity for the sake of immediacy and emotional directness. Where a forced complexity does exist, it is always mannered, undanceable, often unsellable, and not really rock and roll at all.

Interestingly, the gulf that the critics like to establish between themselves and the industry is paralleled by the chasm they create between themselves and the music. The critics write the way they do because they seem unable to address the fact that rock is nothing more than the product of an industry whose purpose is to provide entertainment—not self-conscious art—to consumers for profit. Nor can they admit that the *appeal* of rock lies in its ability to suggest certain unanalyzable emotions of a personal, subjective, and above all sexual nature: hence its function as dance music. What the music offers its listeners on this level is completely lost when it is "criticized." As one unusually honest critic says in his *Stranded* essay: "It wouldn't be fair for me to impose my interpretation of such lapidarily subjective imagery on you, and . . . in many cases I don't really know what [the singer] is talking about."

In the book's last piece, Ed Ward, former record editor of *Rolling Stone*, enters a dissenting opinion on the enterprise of rock criticism, indicting his fellow contributors for having "wasted their talents on trash and ephemera." As to the trash and ephemera, there can be no question that this is an accurate assessment. As to the talent, although some rock critics do have demonstrable literary gifts, the fact that they have expended so much energy and have made such heavy critical weather of so impoverished a body of material does not speak well for their powers of judgment. And this is stating the case at its kindest.

Marx for All Seasons

MARXISM: FOR AND AGAINST. By ROBERT L. HEILBRONER. *Norton. 186 pp. $9.95.*

Reviewed by SIDNEY HOOK

THIS is an intriguing title: it arouses expectations of a judicious and balanced evaluation of the specific doctrines of Marx and Marxism from a scholarly and non-

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partisan point of view. Unfortunately, there is a fundamental ambiguity in the way the author understands the terms "for" and "against." They do not mean so much "true" or "valid" and "false" or "invalid" as *for* revolutionary change or *against* revolutionary change. But should not one's attitude toward the revolutionary change urged by Marxism depend largely upon the truth or falsity of its major doctrines?

Heilbroner does not really convey his own position on Marxism when he says that it is "beyond that of total embrace or rejection." Except for pious dolts or fanatics, could we not say this of any great thinker in human history—Plato, Kant, Kierkegaard? Who embraces or rejects them totally? I know of no reputable historian, regardless of his attitude toward revolutionary change, who *totally* rejects all of Marx's views. The relevant questions are: which specific doctrines or propositions are valid, and to what extent?

Heilbroner defines Marxism in terms of four elements: (1) a dialectical approach to knowledge itself; (2) a materialist approach to history; (3) a social analysis of capitalism—Marx's theory of value and surplus value; and (4) a commitment to socialism. This last element is confusing since it is not logically related to the other three. For Marx believed that his economic and historical doctrines were true regardless of whether one was committed to socialism. He held that they were as objective as the findings of natural science, valid regardless of anyone's commitment.

Before assessing Heilbroner's evaluation of Marx's contributions one must say something of how he goes about his inquiry. Instead of testing Marx's statements about history and economics in the light of the empirical evidence, he considers them in relation to what capitalism essentially is. "We read *Capital* not merely to discover how capitalism works . . . but to learn what capitalism *is*." This essentialist approach is quite foreign to Marx's outlook, as it is to every scientific analysis. What a thing, system, or process is cannot be unrelated to how it behaves. "By their fruits ye shall know them" and "the proof of the pudding is in the eating" are customary Marxist maxims. Not so for Heilbroner. "I find it imaginable," he writes, "that the next century will declare Marx to have been completely mistaken about the future course of capitalism; but as long as capitalism exists, I do not believe that we will ever be able to declare that he was mistaken in his identification of its inner nature." On this view, no matter what happens Marx is right! It is doubtful whether Marx or any sensible Marxist made such a claim, yet it pervades Heilbroner's discussion of all the defining elements of Marxism.

1. According to Heilbroner, "a dialectical approach yields a rich harvest for the imagination but a scanty one for exact analysis." How can it then enable us to distinguish between fantasies and truths? Marx speaks of the dialectic *method*, not of the dialectical vision or imagination, and rightly or wrongly, identifies it with the scientific method which he thought he was applying in his inquiry into the nature and development of capitalism. For Heilbroner, by contrast, the dialectic goes beyond ordinary scientific method by correcting its limitations, although it is not clear how it does that. He does not tell us what specific truths reached by the dialectic are beyond the reach of the ordinary empirical methods of scientific investigation, and how we know they are true. Are we dealing here with a doctrine of two truths, with the dialectic serving as the higher truth with all the awesome and noisome consequences illustrated in the history of Soviet physics, biology, and historiography?

"Dialectics," Heilbroner writes, "seeks to expand the conception of the scientist's work beyond the borders of a positivist approach." The evil of positivism, in Heilbroner's eyes, is its emphasis upon prediction. Prediction, of course, is not everything in science, but on any coherent philosophy of science a theory that makes false predictions cannot be true. Heilbroner is happy to cite some of Marx's economic predictions that have been confirmed but is averse to considering the devastating implications of

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those that have been falsified. The dialectic functions in his thought to sustain the will to believe.

2. Even more unsatisfactory is Heilbroner's discussion of historical materialism. The "mode of economic production" functions, according to him, only as a limiting condition on a culture (like oxygen?), and far from determining the legal, political, and religious institutions of society, as Marx clearly says, is itself determined by them. Heilbroner simply does not confront the evidence that, however it may have been in some previous periods, in the 20th century the political mode is more decisive for historical events than is the economic. On the theory of historical materialism how would one explain, for instance, the fact that the United States and Great Britain, with their capitalist modes of production, joined the Soviet Union, with its socialist mode of production, in a war against Nazi Germany, another capitalist power? How would one explain the October Russian Revolution and the emergence of a socialist economy in a country and under conditions in which, according to historical materialism, it would have been impossible? The answer is that, having seized political power, the Bolsheviks then built an economic base beneath it.

Neither does Heilbroner judge the theory of historical materialism in the light of the emergence of the democratic welfare state, the rise of fascism, or the recurrent strength of nationalist sentiment, all completely unanticipated by the theory. He ignores completely the role of personality in history. Even Leon Trotsky admitted before he died that without Lenin there would have been no October Revolution—and, one can add, probably no Mussolini in Italy or Hitler in Germany because, among other reasons, the Bolsheviks split the working-class resistance to fascism. One can recognize and applaud the heuristic value of the theory of historical materialism in historical inquiry and reject, on the basis of the evidence, the current claims to its validity.

3. Surprisingly, in the light of modern economic theory with which he is quite familiar, Heilbroner accepts without qualification Marx's theory of value and surplus value, admitting at the same time that it is an "unprovable proposition." He does nothing, however, to meet the standard difficulties that call it into question. On Marx's theory, in an industry in which there is intensive use of labor (a window-cleaning firm, for example) there should be a higher rate of profit than in an industry in which highly developed technology is used (a power plant). Yet a more or less uniform rate of profit prevails. Heilbroner brings in the market to explain that the prices of production must diverge from the true values of the commodities produced. This makes value irrelevant to any specific question of price and what determines it, and to the rate of profit in any specific industry.

Although willing to credit Marx for successfully predicting "the rise of large-scale industry, the internationalization of capital, . . . and the centralization of capital"—which are not necessarily implied by the theory of surplus value and can be explained independently—he dismisses phenomena that invalidate even more important predictions of Marx like the progressive impoverishment of the working class, the disappearance of the middle class, and the growing reserve army of the unemployed. Heilbroner's treatment of the "immiseration" of the working class is scandalous. He cannot deny that with respect to "the material conditions" of life, workers today are far better off than in Marx's time, but he artfully suggests that in some non-material way the workers are no better off—the factory robs labor of "its human rhythm and meaning." Nothing is more obvious than that Marx, in speaking of the growing "mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, and exploitation" of the workers, was addressing the quality of life of the English proletariat of his own time. Who can honestly deny the tremendous difference in the quality of life of the English working class in Marx's time—when their life expectancy was (according to Marx himself) seventeen in Manchester, fifteen in Birmingham—and their life today?

UNDER the guise of a balanced inquiry, Heilbroner has given us an apologia for Marx's main tenets. Where the evidence is overwhelmingly against Marx, he tempers his criticism to make the error appear minor. Thus, nothing is more central to Marx's political philosophy than his view that the state is the executive committee of the dominant economic class. The theory, strategy, and even tactics of current Communist theory depend on this false notion. But to Heilbroner it is merely an "incautious" statement.

Where Heilbroner departs from Marx is at the point of Marx's perennial appeal. Marx was a fighter for human freedom, for whom socialism meant not an abridgement of the political and cultural freedoms of bourgeois society but their expansion. Heilbroner's view is that "it is unlikely that a socialist civilization will be fundamentally interested in what we call liberty. . . ." He may be right! But that was not Marx's view.

Heilbroner keeps referring to the "Marxist" regimes of Cuba and other Communist and Third World countries, but never asks what makes them Marxist, aside from their self-characterization. Are they dictatorships of the proletariat? However the term is conceived, Marx never identified the dictatorship of the proletariat with the dictatorship of a party, and a minority one at that, over the proletariat and the entire population. Heilbroner can hardly be unaware of this. In his view, however, Marx's commitment to human freedom and his faith in the prospects of a democratic society are utopian fantasies. Even so, moral and intellectual hygiene would require that he use the term Marxist with greater precision. One cannot escape the impression that in writing about Marx he is fearful of giving offense to the "Marxists" of today's radical, anti-democratic Left.

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